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the section

TWENTY YEARS

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I ever thought that a case of this description ought to be treated with great modern and even wrote as well as talked a great deal about it. But now I am quite of a different opinion I think there is nothing like cutting away thro' thick & thin!
This deformity is quite inconsistent, believe me, with the Nature of your Constitution & therefore must be get rid of. I will undertake with your approbation to remove it & my assistant Doctor Russell here will prepare you for the Operation
I can't say that my bodily health was ever better, & that I ever felt stronger tho' to be sure I am not growing younger but then every one is telling me how deformed I am grown of late & this tumour which I have had from my infancy is all a Mass of Corruption
Yet I begin to think we could have done better when we found how determined to think that his Constitution was impaired to have tried just in the way of nothing a gentle alterative Course
I say the Man has no defect in his Constitution & thus that they call corruption is necessary to his existence but now because he would not believe me but chose rather to submit to the experiments of these rash operators. What mischiefs who is a sensible Man lays all the blame on me

TWENTY YEARS

Being a Study in the Development

of the Party System between

1815 & 1835

BY

CYRIL ALINGTON

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SOMETIME FELLOW OF ALL SOULS COLLEGE AND
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PREFACE

THE books of schoolmasters are by a law of nature written in the holidays, and a charitable public which sees in the fact some excuse for their defects has its reward in the smallness of their number. This book has been written at some little distance from standard works of reference and amid some considerable distractions, for it is a pathetic fallacy that a schoolmaster's holidays are entirely a period of repose. That it has not suffered even more heavily from the former cause is due to the kindness of the friends who have been good enough to read the manuscript and to prune its errors. I should like to thank my old pupil Mr. Hollis of Balliol for much help in matters of detail, and the indefatigable secretary, without whose help I should neither have dared to begin nor have survived to finish it.

C. A. A.

PARLIAMENT PIECE,
RAMSBURY, WILTS.
July 31, 1920.

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The illustrations are all taken from the volumes of H. B.'s *political sketches in the British Museum.* John Doyle, *their author, was born in 1797; his drawings, published at irregular intervals between 1829 and 1851, did much to reform the taste and style of English political caricature. His signature is fancifully contrived by the junction of two* J's *and two* D's. *In the explanations given to the illustrations the names are always to be read from left to right.*

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INTRODUCTION

THE unprofessional historian labours under many difficulties—difficulties of which he only begins to be fully conscious when his work is drawing to a conclusion. It is then that he realizes how rash are his judgements and how precarious his conclusions: he feels ashamed of hasty verdicts which he cannot claim to have established by original research. To such original research the author of this book can make no claim: it will be clear to the reader that he has studied many of the more obvious authorities; but beyond that he cannot pretend to have gone. His only excuse for writing is to endeavour to share with people of little leisure some of the enjoyment which the use of his spare hours has given to himself.

And if it be asked whether so slight a study is worth publishing at all the answer must be that first impressions honestly recorded have a value distinct from those arrived at by long thought and study. A rapid survey may be inaccurate but it has a unity of its own, and laborious historians may fail to

> recapture
> The first fine careless rapture

with which they have once believed themselves to appreciate the true meaning of a period or the true character of a statesman. Browning was not thinking of historians, professional or unprofessional, when he wrote these lines; but in *Mr. Sludge the Medium* he states the argument

against the writer who, with an elaborate pretence of research,

> just records
> What makes his case out, quite ignores the rest.

Such an author is paid and praised for his untiring industry and brilliant insight; but there is another side to the picture:

> There 's plenty of ' How did you contrive to grasp
> The thread which led you through this labyrinth ?
> How build such solid fabric out of air ?
> How on such slight foundation found this tale,
> Biography, narrative ? ' or, in other words,
> How many lies did it require to make
> The portly truth you here present us with ?

No writer, however unpretentious, can afford to ignore this danger, or can be sure that he has avoided it: he can only claim that, in Bishop Creighton's phrase, he has ' tried to write true history ', or, at any rate, that he has set down nothing in malice. The latter caution is particularly needed in any attempt at political history, in which it requires a constant effort to discard the prejudices brought from our own time, and to remember how words have changed their meaning even in a hundred years. But it is only by studying the politicians of the past that we can hope to be just to the politicians of the present, and that is a lesson which every civilized community needs to learn. The study of history will not in itself make us either optimists or pessimists, for both temperaments can find food in the failures and follies of the past, but it will at least make our hopes and fears more reasonable and our judgements more secure.

Human nature does not change greatly in a hundred years, and English human nature perhaps as little as any: there is much in the history of this period to regret, and more to praise; but we read, or should read, history

neither to praise nor to blame but to learn, and one thing which these twenty years can teach is that neither party has any monopoly of wisdom or of patriotism. Lord Melbourne, who was far from blind to the failings either of himself or of his fellow men, once wrote to a friend: 'the great fault of the present time is that men hate each other so damnably: for my part I love them all'. What is possible for a Prime Minister should not be beyond the reach of the mere student of political history; and there are certainly few prominent actors in this period of whom it cannot be truly said that to study their lives is to find much to admire and something at least to love.

It was a Radical politician who in his later years declared that 'the choice between one man and another among the English people signifies less than I used formerly to think it did. The English mind is much of one pattern, take whatsoever class you will. The same favourite prejudices, amiable and otherwise: the same antipathies, coupled with ill-regulated though benevolent efforts to eradicate human evils, are wellnigh universal'.[1] The judgement is as true of politicians as of the constituents whom they represent, and if this book has a moral it may be found in these wise words of Mr. Grote. The difficulties of holding office without power, the need of conciliating the extremists of your own party without shocking its more moderate members, the fundamental question how far loyalty to a party is a moral obligation—from problems such as these few characters emerge altogether unscathed; and the statesmen of these twenty years were no more proof than their successors have been against the temptation of denouncing in opposition acts which they were to imitate in office, and of assuming

[1] *Life of Grote*, p. 312.

a consistency of rectitude in which they did not themselves believe. But, take them for all in all, they were honest and well-meaning, if not as wise and foreseeing as they sometimes claimed to be; and the real reason for studying their actions, their successes and their failures alike, is because it is very certain, thanks to the beneficent working of a not wholly inscrutable Providence, that we shall look upon their like again.

I

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE ORIGINS, THE JUSTIFICATION, AND THE DANGERS OF THE PARTY SYSTEM

The following Ministries held office during the period 1815–35:

	Prime Minister.
1812–27	*Earl of Liverpool.*
1827 (April to August) . .	*George Canning.*
August 1827–January 1828 . .	*Viscount Goderich.*
1828–30	*Duke of Wellington.*
1830–34	*Earl Grey.*
1834, July–November . . .	*Viscount Melbourne.*
November 1834–April 1835 . .	*Sir R. Peel.*
1835–41	*Viscount Melbourne.*

Of these Ministries the first four were based on compromise, though the fourth soon became the Ministry of a single party; the fifth was a party Ministry framed for a single purpose but disagreeing on other important questions; the sixth had little real cohesion; the seventh was the creation of the King; the eighth and last was the only one formed on normal party lines.

I

THE first twenty years after Waterloo have a special interest of their own. This is not due to the fact that they comprise 'the most miserable epoch in English history'—if that gloomy judgement is well founded—nor to their producing the most famous of political remedies in the Reform Bill; nor need we dwell on the great personalities who play a part in their events, though Castlereagh and Canning, Wellington and Grey, were worthy representatives of their contrasted causes. It is rather because they witnessed the development of the modern party system into the form which we know that they must always attract the attention of the political historian. The eighteenth century saw its birth in the reigns of William and Anne, but the parties of those days held principles so remote from those of their successors that the student is as much bewildered as enlightened: Tories who are strenuous advocates of non-intervention: Whigs who clamour for a spirited foreign policy: Tories who urge retrenchment and the reduction, if not the abolition, of standing armies, contending with Whigs who are ready to maintain other armies as well as our own and to spend money freely in inducing other people to fight their battles—among such strange bearers of historic names the student moves with blank misgiving in a world which he fails to realize. In any case party considerations soon give place to those more personal: Walpole was driven from office by a coalition united in nothing but hatred

to him, and the majestic policy of the elder Pitt was neither Whig nor Tory. The American War saw the beginning of genuine party feeling and the Whig party came into existence, but the personal element entered largely into a struggle where so much turned on the individual character of the King. The French Revolution delayed the growth of party divisions, or rather forced the one coherent party to close its ranks and to expose itself to the unjust, though very natural, accusation of lack of patriotism. It was not till the end of the war that the political situation could develop on natural lines, and even then the personal preferences of the King played too strong a part. No party can be exempt from personal influences, just as every leader who deserves the name must lead some who do not entirely agree with him, but the Throne in a constitutional country should be above party, and in these twenty years this was certainly not the case. The result was a series of efforts at compromise founded on reservations which the Monarchy imposed: the Liverpool Ministry, Canning's Ministry, Goderich's Ministry, Wellington's Ministry, were all avowedly based on compromise on the most important topic of the day: the Duke of Wellington obtained a united party for a few months and carried with its aid the one measure which it was united to resist. Lord Grey's Ministry was united in one object, but broke in pieces the moment that object was secured; and the King was able for the last time to dismiss a party leader in the interests of that ideal coalition which all wise men, and even some stupid kings, sigh for, but which the former never hope to see.

With his action the period closes: the two parties were ranged in opposition: there existed 'that indispensable prerequisite for party government, a broad and intelligible difference of opinion, views of home and foreign policy

of two distinct sorts, each of which might be held and was held strongly by honest and capable men '.[1]

Disraeli in *Coningsby* describes the two parties which thus came into definite existence as consisting respectively of 'the destructive party; a party with distinct and intelligible principles: they seek a specific for the evils of our social system in the general suffrage of the population': the other the Conservative party, 'who, without any embarrassing promulgation of principles, wish to keep things as they find them as long as they can'. This cool-headed verdict recalls the equal candour of a later leader of the same party who consoled his Conservative audience by the reflection that if all the stupid people were on their side all the cranks were on the other.[2]

Whether these epigrammatic verdicts are true or not, by 1835 the definite division had been accomplished, and there seemed at least a fair prospect that party warfare in England would proceed on broad and consistent lines. These hopes were not entirely fulfilled, and lest we should feel inclined to blame individual statesmen for the result it is perhaps worth while to labour a little the obvious point of the extreme artificiality of the party system. It is probably the case that without its aid no government

[1] This definition is given by Sir William Anson: it is a pious pleasure to record my debt to him for a large part of the preceding paragraphs.

[2] This is perhaps a rather crude paraphrase of Mr. Bonar Law's more diplomatic utterance: 'You know that in the Radical party all the cranks and madmen of every kind are congregated. In the House of Commons, if they get in at all, they are always sitting on those benches. In the same way inevitably in the Conservative Party we must have those who are essentially reactionary, who think that the world is perfectly good as it is, and who do not desire to make any improvement. That element must always be in our party, but it would be a bad thing for the party, and a bad thing for the country, if it ever became the dominating influence.'—Oct. 31, 1913.

can be carried on in a constitutional country, but the extreme difficulty which the inhabitant of any one state finds in comprehending the party divisions of another should warn us against supposing the distinction to be as clear as the protagonists on either side would ask us to believe. No doubt Gilbert was right in declaring that 'every boy and every gal' is disposed by prenatal influences to the Liberal or Conservative side; but he was not drawing entirely on his imagination when he pictured the man whose Radical legs carried him into the wrong lobby in defiance of the advice of his Conservative head. There are few politicians (and they the most dangerous) who have never felt the attraction of the opposite party, and who would not even in the hour of success endorse the gloomy saying of the great Lord Halifax—'If there was any party entirely composed of honest Men it would certainly prevail; but both the honest Men and the Knaves resolve to turn one another off when the Business is done'. It has been truly remarked that 'it is no accident that there is a certain ambiguity about the party affiliations of nearly all our greater statesmen: Chatham, Pitt, Burke, Canning, Peel, Palmerston, Disraeli, and Gladstone—none of these has an absolutely consistent party record: and indeed a man with such a record would be more likely to win distinction as a good partisan than as a great statesman'.[1]

Palmerston, when he defended his vote for the Reform Bill by saying that the 'gigantic mind' of Mr. Canning (whose principles he was reproached for deserting) was 'not to be pinned down by the Lilliputian threads of verbal quotation', was uttering a protest of which no great statesman need scruple to avail himself.

Lord Eldon, who valued as the greatest compliment

[1] Monypenny, *Life of Disraeli*, i. 276.

ever paid him the cry of the Oxford crowd, ' There is old Eldon : cheer him, for he never ratted,' is as much the type of the true party politician on the one side as his biographer Lord Campbell is on the other, and it is in the nature of the case that such men are more highly esteemed by their contemporaries than by posterity, for in the last resort that other saying of Lord Halifax holds true—that ' the best Party is but a kind of a conspiracy against the rest of the Nation '.

Party politicians by the very fact of their existence are compelled to exaggerate their differences, but we must beware of allowing them to impose on us as laws of nature what are in general only the convenient rules of the game. Coalitions can seldom succeed owing to the hold which these rules have upon us, and it was not left to Disraeli to discover that England does not love them. Old Lord Eldon years before had pronounced a similar verdict, ' This thing called junction of parties never strengthens anybody, and it does nobody credit.' They are often based on fraud, and, when they are not, they are based on an agreement which is overlaid too thickly by superficial antagonisms for the average British mind to appreciate it. It is one of the inevitable results that a coalition such as has to be formed in time of crisis is never as strong as the general honesty and individual talents of its members would lead one to hope. The difficulties of Canning, the lamentable failure of Goderich, and the schism in the Duke of Wellington's Cabinet in our period are sufficient justification for the safer if less ambitious methods which we have adopted : how artificial these methods are is shown by the two great instances in which Sir Robert Peel, ' the greatest Member of Parliament ' in our history, found it necessary to break the fetters in which the Parliamentary system had bound him.

It is interesting to consider the effect of this system on the individuals who work it. There are few consistent Tories (though Lord Eldon, whose last speech was to oppose the making of the Great Western Railway, is an instance to the contrary): there are more consistent Liberals, and it is perhaps due to the Liberal supremacy in literature that 'the doubtful virtue of consistency' has been awarded so high a place in the political calendar. Whigs have no doubt a greater loyalty to abstract principles than their opponents, who reserve the right to adapt their less sacred doctrines to the needs of the moment and may claim in a very real sense that their consistency rooted in inconsistency stands. Their opponents not unnaturally hold that it is rather faith unfaithful which keeps them falsely true.

It has been said that when there is a knot in English politics Whigs fumble over it; Tories cut it, or try to cut it. The contrasted temperaments can hardly be more happily expressed, for those who cut laugh at the delays of the fumblers, while those who endeavour to untie despise the cheap expedient of the knife. The Duke was acting like a true Conservative when he yielded to the imperative need for Catholic Emancipation, and Peel when he adopted the principles of Free Trade. Disraeli's abuse of him was not directed at his change of mind: he knew well that this was a privilege which no true statesman could afford to abandon. His attack, so far as it was not due to personal reasons, was inspired by Peel's continual claim to be acting on 'principle', whereas Disraeli's whole case against him was that he had in fact no political principles but was actuated by mere expediency.

It is a common assumption that the Liberal who declines from grace is a renegade, while the Conservative

who sees light is a brand snatched from the burning. The assumption is natural and dangerous—natural because the general principles of the Liberals are fundamentally sound and are on the whole vindicated by the course of history and the growing power of that democracy 'which, like the grave, takes but does not give back'. It is dangerous, because the application of general principles must depend on the circumstances of the time, and of those circumstances no one is an infallible judge. It was Lord John Russell who claimed 'finality' for the results of the Reform Bill, and it is a commonplace of everyday life that no Conservatives are so convinced as those who are conserving their own reforms. Neither party is exempt from the belief in its own indispensability, and the desire to retain office in the name of principle has often led to strangely unprincipled results. The following cynical judgement, whether justified or not in the case of him to whom it was originally applied, has been true of many of his distinguished and patriotic successors in either party: 'In his generous mind, expanded as it has been by his long official character, there is no propensity so strong as *a love of the service of his country*.'

Lord Lyndhurst, who no doubt was a Tory of a more subtle and therefore more typical character than Lord Eldon, was continually taunted with having expressed Radical sentiments in his youth: Joseph Hume even went so far as to suggest that he had brought republican principles with him from America, which he quitted at the age of three. He and Lord Brougham, who was clearly open to the charge of apostasy, were well able to defend themselves; but their conduct is felt to demand a defence of which Lord Palmerston stands in no need though he had served for many years in a Tory ministry. It is universally regarded as discreditable to Disraeli to

have stood for Parliament as a Whig : it is Mr. Gladstone's glory that he was once ' the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories '. John Bright, who, in his younger days at any rate, was one of the soundest of party men, once declared of his opponents that ' they always have been wrong ; they always will be wrong : and when they cease to be wrong they will cease to be the Tory party '. But this comfortable theory is too simple to cover all the facts. The truth is that no party and no individual is entirely consistent. Canning, who favoured Catholic Emancipation and detested Reform, was as good a Tory as Castlereagh, who favoured both, or the Duke of Wellington, who passed the one and abstained from voting against the other. Neither side can afford to deny the right of development, and the charge of inconsistency deserves little attention whichever party may at the moment bring it. Even Tories may have principles : even Whigs may claim that circumstances alter cases : even Lord Grey may be guilty of factious opposition : and even the Duke of Wellington may prove himself a statesman.

II

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE LIVERPOOL ADMINISTRATION

The following were the chief members of the Liverpool Ministry, which held office from June 9, 1812, to April 24, 1827:

First Lord of the Treasury .	*Earl of Liverpool.*
Foreign Secretary . .	*Lord Castlereagh (became Marquess of Londonderry in 1822; committed suicide in the same year; succeeded by)*
	George Canning.
Home Secretary . .	*Viscount Sidmouth (resigned January 1822; succeeded by)*
	Robert Peel.
Chancellor of the Exchequer	*Nicholas Vansittart (resigned December 1822); succeeded by*
	F. J. Robinson.
Lord Privy Seal . .	*Earl of Westmorland.*
First Lord of the Admiralty	*Viscount Melville.*
Lord Chancellor . .	*Lord Eldon (raised to Earldom 1821).*
President of the Board of Control (India) . .	*Earl of Buckinghamshire (died February 1816; succeeded by)*
	George Canning (resigned June 1820; succeeded by)
	Bragge Bathurst (resigned January 1822; succeeded by)
	Charles Wynn.

Secretary at War . .	*Lord Palmerston.*
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland .	*Marquess Wellesley (appointed January 1822).*
Secretary for Ireland . .	*Robert Peel (resigned 1819; succeeded by)*
	Charles Grant (resigned June 1823; succeeded by)
	H. Goulburn.
Secretary for Colonies and War	*Earl Bathurst.*
President of the Board of Trade	*F. J. Robinson (appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer February 1823; succeeded by)*
	W. Huskisson.
Chief Commissioner of Woods and Forests . . .	*W. Huskisson (appointed President of the Board of Trade February 1823).*
Master of the Ordnance .	*Earl of Mulgrave (resigned 1818; succeeded by)*
	The Duke of Wellington.

It will be seen that 1822 is the year in which the Ministry underwent most changes. In that year Sidmouth's retirement introduced Peel to the Home Office; the Grenvillites as represented by Wynn joined the Ministry and Lord Wellesley was sent to Ireland. It should be observed that these changes, which tended to liberalize the Government, were made before Castlereagh's unexpected death made room for Canning at the Foreign Office.

II

THERE is another more obvious, though less important, reason why we should devote attention to the period which followed Waterloo: historical analogies are dangerous things, for in the nature of the case they can never amount to proof, and the temptation to employ them as such is often irresistible; but if Seeley was right in his dictum that 'past history is present politics' we shall not despise such light as the affairs of a century ago may throw on the difficulties of to-day. For assuredly it cannot be denied that the conditions of the early years of this period offer an analogy so close as to be startling to the affairs of to-day. A hundred years ago we had finished a great war against a tremendous foe: we had asserted the liberties of Europe against national and personal ambition. The war had been brought to an end by a Ministry disliked by many of its friends and distrusted by a strong party in the state: there was no statesman of transcendent genius who dominated the situation and commanded universal respect. The peace which ensued was bitterly criticized: it failed conspicuously in this country to restore the age of gold, and there were many who held its provisions to be ungenerous and unjust.

Ireland was then, as now, the despair of all those who have to govern her: she had celebrated French successes with an enthusiasm which is no surprise to the present generation, and her grievances were no less obvious than those which modern statesmen have to face, though they had the delusive appearance of being more easily remedied. And in the background there hovered a new political

doctrine as menacing and as little understood as that to which we have been introduced, for France was then as far from us as Russia is now, and Jacobinism was as ready an explanation of any desire for change as Bolshevism is to-day.

Enough has been said in support of the obvious truism that it is worth while at the close of a great war to recollect the circumstances which attended the close of the last: further parallels will leap to the eyes as we proceed in small things as in great.[1]

It would be alien to the purpose of this book to attempt to develop them in detail; in days when the politician and the economist have to take all the world for their parish it may even be doubted whether any one has the knowledge and the judgement equal to the task. It will be something if we can remind ourselves that all our troubles are not new and all our hopes not unfounded, and the study of a bygone century may help to make us more temperate and more useful critics of our own. It is, after all, in these broad analogies that the value of political history mainly lies and in this spirit that we should study the history of the past.

The student of history can roam at pleasure among the memorials of the dead, and such judgements as he can form have a reasonable chance of being unaffected by

[1] After the Napoleonic war the condition of English dancing was considered so deplorable that a committee of great ladies had to take the matter in hand and the institution of Almacks was the result. The six great ladies who met at Devonshire House to organize the subscription dances and to supervise the introduction of the waltz and polka (a new step which a few years before people had stood upon the chairs to witness for the first time) little guessed that the next European conflagration would be followed by the atrocities of the Jazz Band, and the sale of the house in which they met to a Company, limited indeed but hardly select.

personal prejudice: he will be a happy man if he is able to say as did a great teacher of history after an afternoon spent in Westminster Abbey: 'Then and there do I love my countrymen, and think them all kind, all worthy of immortality; friends that have been denied me, allies whom I would fain summon to the wars, taxpayers who helped to make this glorious England, and who deserved to live long enough to hear, as I have heard, of Delhi and Lucknow: *Resurgant si fieri potest. Pereat mors. Vivat Anglia.*'[1]

When we pass to the consideration of the statesmen who in those days had to face the problems of peace we need neither hope nor fear to find an exact anticipation of those under whom it is our lot to live. The same play is seldom performed by an identical caste, but the necessities of the occasion impose very definite limits on the performers, and the mediocrity of Lord Liverpool, the good sense of Peel, and the dangerous brilliance of Canning are as sure to find successors as the sturdy conservatism of Lord Eldon.[2]

[1] *Letters and Journals of W. Cory*, p. 103. It may be worth recording that for Queen Victoria, who with all her statesmanship had little appreciation of history, 'nothing more gloomy and doleful' existed than Westminster Abbey as a place of burial. Morley's *Gladstone*, ii. 460.

[2] It was amusing during the recent revival of *The Mikado* to see how the actor is never at a loss for individuals whom the gallery will recognize as 'apologetic statesmen of a compromising kind'. Each generation supplies its own instances with unfailing regularity, and, no doubt, equal injustice.

It is a profound saying of Mr. Chesterton:

> What I like about Clive
> Is that he 's no longer alive;
> There 's a great deal to be said
> For being dead.

It is with this battle-cry that the disciples of the classics maintain their superiority as instruments of education to modern languages:

The Tory Ministry had won the war, and, inevitable as it may seem now, that was no inconsiderable achievement. Tardy justice has been done of late to the constancy of Liverpool, Perceval, and Sidmouth and to the judgement of the Duke of York: but the man who deserved, and at first received, the chief gratitude among all our statesmen was Lord Castlereagh. To him more than to any other individual it was due that the motley collection of Allies had been held together to the end: he had represented, not inadequately, his nation in his proper person at their councils, and it was no empty compliment to say, as Thiers did, 'on pouvait dire de lui que c'était l'Angleterre elle même qui se déplaçait pour se rendre au camp des coalisés'. Had he died at the time of his triumph his fame would have been assured: but fate was not so kind. Poor Mr. Croker, an admirable public servant, owes his immortality to his quarrels with Macaulay and Disraeli, in both of which he appears to have been in the right; and it has seemed at times that Castlereagh would be best remembered as the target of Shelley's bitterest verses and Byron's most indecent epigram.

He lived to bear the blame of Sidmouth's restrictions on liberty and the responsibility for those repressive measures (in which Whigs like Lord Grenville concurred) which possibly preserved the country from a serious rising. It is difficult at this distance of time to estimate the danger, and it is very possible that it was exaggerated, but it should not be hard to make allowances for a statesman who had seen the horrors of revolution very close at hand and thought with the Duke of Wellington that anything was preferable to the risk of civil war. It may

and in this spirit that the historian can hopefully pursue his studies without fear of being disturbed by the shrieks from the dissecting table.

be granted that he had no enthusiasm and 'an absolutely unimaginative mind',[1] but Lord Salisbury, from whom these criticisms come, finds in him also 'the breadth of view indispensable in the statesman of a troubled period'.

It is often forgotten that this unenlightened politician was a consistent advocate of Catholic emancipation, and that this 'cold-blooded fish', as he was called by Wilberforce, who admired and trusted him, did more for the cause of the slaves than many more celebrated philanthropists.

He has often been regarded as the dupe of the Holy Alliance and it may be true that Metternich spoke of him as a 'baby': but it is equally certain that he protested vigorously against every attempt to translate absolutism into action or to bind England to a reactionary policy: when Canning recognized the independence of the colonies in South America it was not the reversal but the fulfilment of the policy of Castlereagh. Of his political foresight one instance will suffice: it was proposed to introduce into the Spanish constitution the American provision for banishing Ministers from the Legislature: Castlereagh expressed the hope that 'this inconceivable absurdity' would not be repeated. At a moment when we are suffering from its effects it is a relief to find our feelings expressed by a politician whose utterances can no longer prejudice the friendship of nations.

Whether he was always as wise as this may very reasonably be doubted; but it admits of no doubt that in a very literal sense he gave his life for his country. There are few scenes in political history more touching than the visit of the Duke of Wellington, charged with

[1] Though Sir Walter Scott speaks of him as the only man whom he had ever heard affirm that he had seen an apparition. (*Letters*, ii. 153.)

the mission to tell him that his constant work had unhinged his brain. And the multitude which hooted his coffin into Westminster Abbey was less truly representative of the verdict of his fellow countrymen than the House of Commons which rose with one accord to greet him when he returned bringing peace with honour from Vienna.

It is customary to dismiss Lord Liverpool with contempt, and the pink nose with which he was credited by Cobbett is as uninspiring a characteristic as the ' blinking eyes ' of a contemporary squib. Palmerston on one occasion complained that he had acted ' as he always does to a friend in personal questions, shabbily, timidly and ill ', and no doubt in his hot youth regarded him as the incarnation of ' the stupid old Tory party, who bawl out the memory of Pitt while they are opposing all the measures which he held most important '. But a young minister who was soon to find that he ' liked the Whigs much better than the Tories and agreed with them much more ' was not an unprejudiced critic of ' the pigtails ' who consisted of ' old women like the Chancellor, spoonies like Liverpool, ignoramuses like Westmorland, old stumped-up Tories like Bathurst '. After all, there must have been qualities of greatness in a man whose career in office was so prolonged and so distinguished, and who, contrary to all expectations, was able to preserve unity in his Cabinet for fifteen years, though its elements were so discordant that it broke up completely as soon as he was removed from its head. ' There is nothing like trying ' said Wellington to him, when he was endeavouring to form his Ministry ; and he proved worthy of the advice.

Lord Sidmouth's reputation is harder to retrieve, and may not deserve the effort. The best that can be said for him is that it is a piece of singular ill-fortune that the same

man should have been forced to find himself a rival to Pitt and a butt for Canning. 'Carrying into politics the indefinable air of a physician inspecting the tongue of the state', he bore to the end the title of 'Le Médecin malgré lui', as his house (according to Canning) bore that of the Villa Medici. It may be his good fortune that the tradition of his insignificance, for which Canning is largely responsible, has put on Castlereagh the odium for those measures for which Sidmouth as Home Secretary was technically, and perhaps really, responsible. With the exception of the veteran Lord Chancellor, he was the only prominent member of the Government who was over fifty, and at fifty-eight he may have already seemed to belong to a past generation; it was at any rate an age which neither Liverpool, Castlereagh, nor Canning, was to live to reach.

Lord Eldon, who was now sixty-four, had given an early foretaste of his loyalty to High Tory principles by being born on June 4, the official birthday of his royal master, and to these first omens he was unswervingly faithful; he was to remain Chancellor till the age of seventy-six, which would have seemed a remarkable achievement had not Lord Campbell accepted the Great Seal in his eightieth year.

The career of these two distinguished Scots (for Lord Eldon, though actually born in Newcastle, must be held to deserve the title) can never fail to encourage those of their countrymen who accept the definition of taste given to Boswell by Lord Eldon's elder brother, 'Taste is that faculty of the mind which leads a Scotchman to prefer England to his own country.' Lord Campbell's career was in a way the more remarkable of the two, for he came to London with no reputation and no prospects, whereas John Scott, encouraged as much as

encumbered by his runaway marriage, was a Fellow of his college, and had distinguished himself by a Prize Essay at Oxford. This reflection might have tempered Campbell's criticism when in his sprightly old age he set his hand to the biography of his great predecessor ; but a Whig is nothing if not in the right, and assuredly if Lord Eldon was ever in the right the Whigs must occasionally have been in the wrong, so Lord Eldon fares ill—though better than poor Lord Lyndhurst whom Lord Campbell pursued from beyond the grave with a singularly rancorous appreciation. Shelley's personal sufferings at the hands of the Lord Chancellor made him unjustly critical of Lord Eldon's law ; Landor used the resources of the Latin language to impute dishonesty where there was only extreme thrift : the real accusation does not lie in these directions, for Eldon was neither fraudulent nor corrupt. He was in very truth a stern unbending Tory, of the sort which brings any party into unpopularity with contemporaries and contempt with posterity : the party game would be impossible without them, and the occasional shelter of a great name like Lord Eldon's gives undeserved countenance to the many, of whom a great writer truly said that ' Ignorance maketh most Men go into a Party and Shame keepeth them from getting out of it '.

He was a disastrous politician, though a great lawyer : two of his most striking personal characteristics are not unkindly preserved in the saying applied indifferently to his brother Lord Stowell and himself, ' he will drink any *given* quantity of port '.[1]

[1] In these remarks we have been mainly dealing with Lord Eldon as a politician : it is right to add that his very critical biographer does not hesitate to place him as a judge above all the judges of his time, and that Lord Lyndhurst records the common saying in the profession that ' no one ever doubted his

Of the other members of the Ministry it is unnecessary to speak at length, for they were either destined to speak loudly by their actions or too insignificant to repay discussion. In the latter class the first place must be given to Vansittart, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, not for his own sake but as illustrating the little importance then attached to an office which we with good reason consider almost supreme. It is hardly credible to us that Lord Palmerston was invited to be Chancellor when he was only twenty-five and had only once opened his lips in the House of Commons. It is true that he had been through what was then a normal course for an ambitious young politician, and taken a course of political economy at Edinburgh, but he was sincere in assuring Perceval, who gave him the invitation, that he was quite without knowledge of finance. And this is not a solitary instance. It is credibly recorded that Mr. Robert Milnes bet a friend £100 that he would be Chancellor of the Exchequer within five years of entering Parliament, and paid his wager after refusing an offer from Mr. Perceval within the specified time. Lord Grey at twenty-four named the Chancellorship of the Exchequer as one of the two offices which he would consent to accept if he took office at all.

Until the time of Sir Robert Peel it does not seem to have been realized that a nation's finance is a subject for experts: his practical assertion of this fact was of great value to his party (for the Whigs had failed conspicuously

decrees except the noble and learned Lord himself'. Landor's epitaph runs:

Officiosus . erga . omnes . potentes . praeter . deum
Quem . satis . ei . erat . adiurare
Criminibus . capitalibus . quorum . numerus
Opprobrio . fuit . legibus . gentique . plura . subtexuit
Aureorum . decies . centena . millia
Litibus . audiendis . acquisivit.

as financiers), and of still greater service to his country. There are very few not professed students of political history who could name any Chancellor of the Exchequer between Vansittart and Peel—with the possible exception of Lord Althorp, who may not uncharitably be described as the exception which proves the rule.

Robinson, the Vice-President of the Board of Trade, was later to earn an immortal phrase from Disraeli, and the more solid, if less lasting, possessions of a Viscounty and an Earldom; the higher steps of the peerage were denied to him, though his friends had named him 'Duke of Fuss and Bustle' in his early days.

Of those who were later to rise to high distinction Huskisson was at the Woods and Forests, and Palmerston Secretary at War (a purely financial office), while Peel as Irish Secretary was learning, as a very typical Englishman, that 'Ireland is a political phenomenon—not influenced by the same feelings as appear to affect mankind in other countries'. Canning was at Lisbon on a mission which did more for his health than for his reputation: but both were such valuable assets to his country that we need not criticize the transaction too severely: the Duke was in France acting, as the one arbitrator whom the rest of Europe would trust—'Une position nouvelle en Europe', as he proudly claims, and one in which he has found no successor.

Such was the Government which Disraeli was in after years to pillory as 'a Cabinet of Mediocrities', 'a clever and showy ministry' which had the greatest of chances and failed to take it; it might, he declares, have settled the questions of Ireland, of Reform, and of 'the rights and properties of our national industries', if it had the courage to base itself on the great historical truths of the Tory tradition. Such criticism, though not undeserved,

is wisdom after the event ; it makes no allowance for the weariness caused by the long and successful effort to win the war, for nerves shaken by a bitter and factious opposition, nor for the impracticability of the King. Even Disraeli might have hesitated to preach his Tory Gospel of the union of Crown and people, when the crown was worn by George IV and ' the friends of the people ' had been for twenty years identifying their cause with the excesses of France.

III

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LEADING MEMBERS OF THE OPPOSITION

The leading members of the Opposition in 1815 were :

Lord Grenville
Marquess of Buckingham
Charles Wynn
} *The Grenville party which joined the Government in 1822.*

Earl Grey.
G. Ponsonby. Leader in the House of Commons (died 1817).
Lord John Russell.
Lord Althorp.
William Lamb.
E. Tierney. (Succeeded to the leadership on Ponsonby's death.)
Henry Grattan. (The leading champion of the Irish claims ; died 1820.)
William Plunket. (Succeeded to Grattan's position on his death.)
Henry Brougham.
Sir Samuel Romilly. (The leading champion of legal reform ; died 1818.)
Sir James Mackintosh. (Succeeded to Romilly's position on his death.)
Sir Francis Burdett.

During Lord Liverpool's Administration Lord Grey took little part in politics : the main objects of the Opposition were to keep alive the question of Catholic Emancipation and to resist Coercion at home. Burdett and Russell were in these years the protagonists of Reform.

III

THE Opposition was weak, not only by the inevitable contrast with a party which had just concluded a victorious peace, but by its own internal divisions, and it is impossible to deny that its leaders were themselves to blame for the undistinguished position in which they found themselves. They had inherited a very dangerous tradition from their brilliant leader, Charles James Fox, whose erratic path it needed all his genius to justify. Lord Grey and Lord Grenville had, largely in deference to his memory, refused to combine with their opponents (for his own example of such a coalition was not an auspicious precedent) or to postpone the settlement of the Irish question to the task of winning the war. They were now paying the penalty of what must be regarded as an error, though perhaps a noble one: we may be thankful that their successors a hundred years later were more happily inspired.

It has often been remarked how fortunate the Whigs and their successors, the Liberals, have been in their historians. It is not my province to inquire into the reasons of their good fortune, which some would attribute to the attractiveness of truth honestly presented, and others to the legend that the Devil was the first Whig, but of the fact itself there can be no question: nothing, for instance, except some such general consideration can account for the fact that at Oxford five and twenty years ago a student was encouraged to look on the History of Greece with the eyes of Mr. Grote rather than those of Dr. Thirlwall. The latter started with every conceivable

advantage, but the robust radicalism of the utilitarian banker triumphed over the scholarly conservatism of the bishop.

In the period with which I am specially concerned the statement is a truism: Lord Macaulay, Sir William Napier, Sir George Trevelyan, and his son, have conspired to illustrate the fortunes of the party both before and after the period of which it was gloomily written:

> Nought's permanent among the human race
> Except the Whigs not getting into place.

It is notoriously easier to win credit, or at any rate to keep it, in opposition than in power, and so far as posthumous fame is concerned the Whig politicians have no cause to envy their opponents who bore the burden of office and have for many years been bearing the blame for the mistakes they made.

We have learnt to look with a tolerant eye on the excesses of Mr. Fox, and there is a glamour over his misdeeds which no one could claim for the duller transgressions of the Duke of York or the blunders of Lord Sidmouth, but it is hardly possible for a sane man to regret that the destinies of the country were in safer hands than his at the time when the long struggle was drawing to a close. Politicians have often, perhaps habitually, treated soldiers unfairly: it may truly be urged that most of them have an instinctive repugnance to bloodshed and dislike their instruments even when they are successful, but there is a corresponding injustice when the politicians, having performed the dull task of providing the sinews of war and defending their generals in Parliament, are denied any share of credit for the success of the campaign. No one dreams, it has been said, of attributing to Lord Liverpool or Lord Bathurst the faintest share in the triumphs of the Peninsula; but

every one is agreed in giving to Lord Castlereagh full credit for the failure of the Walcheren expedition.[1]

At any rate the Whig party was agreed on Castlereagh's failings and on similar subjects, but there were subjects of disagreement which made their opposition even weaker than it need have been. Lord Grey had deprecated the refusal to recognize Bonaparte in 1815 and was paying for that not ungenerous mistake. Lord Grenville had taken the opposite view, and when a few years later he supported the coercive legislation of the Government all prospect of a strong and united Opposition faded away. Lord Grey's time was to come, but it was not yet.

In the House of Commons the Opposition was led by Ponsonby: the qualifications which had secured him the post when Lord Grey left the Commons for the Lords had been mainly negative. He was not in debt, like Sheridan, he was not a brewer like Whitbread, nor even the son of a merchant like Tierney. His death in 1817 left no great gap, though it put an end to the remarkable situation whereby both parties in the Commons were led by Irishmen and both leaders relied on Irishmen (Canning and Grattan) for their most eloquent support. That this should have been the case fifteen years after the Union is a strong testimony to Irish ability, and an early instance of that docility of the English by which the Scotch and the Welsh races have shown themselves ready to profit.[2]

He was succeeded by Tierney, whose undeniable

[1] Lord Salisbury, *Essay on Lord Castlereagh*, p. 10.

[2] Sir Spencer Walpole adds the curious comment that when Perceval was opposed to Ponsonby 'for the first and probably the last time in history the House of Commons was led by two lawyers'.

abilities could never wholly reconcile his party to the fact that he was 'a new man', though his wealth helped to secure him consideration, and it was something to have fought a duel with Pitt. It is curious to reflect that the aristocratic Tories were considerably more ready to accept the leadership of a merchant in the person of Peel. Tierney was a fine debater, but after accepting office in the nominal Ministry of Lord Goderich he died suddenly just as his party was coming into power. The most distinguished of the unofficial members of the Opposition was undoubtedly Henry Brougham. His abilities were extraordinary, and the famous comment of the poet Rogers on the conclusion of his visit to a country house was well deserved: 'This morning Solon, Lycurgus, Demosthenes, Archimedes, Sir Isaac Newton, Lord Chesterfield, and a great many more went away in one postchaise.' But his versatility was his undoing as a politician, and his ambition was to lead him to hope to excel in too many capacities at once. His restless energy, though invaluable in opposition, was to make him an intolerable colleague in office, and Greville, who had a high respect for his 'most splendid talents', is right in saying that his career proved how little they avail 'unless they are accompanied with other qualities which scarcely admit of definition but which must serve the same purpose that ballast does for a ship'.[1]

With Brougham must be mentioned Sir Francis Burdett, now the Radical member for Westminster, but like him to join the Conservatives in his later years. At present, and until the Reform Bill was passed, he was the most zealous and intrepid champion of every reform, and had suffered for his convictions. He had barricaded his house in Piccadilly in 1810 to avoid arrest on the

[1] Greville, ch. iii.

Speaker's warrant in the cause of freedom of speech, but the house was forced and he confined in the Tower for several weeks. It was alleged that when the military entered Sir Francis was found in his library reading Magna Charta to his children—a *beau geste* to which no politician had a better right. His position as member for Westminster for thirty years (1807–37) gave him great influence, which was always used in the cause of liberty.

Two other members of the Opposition deserve notice for the eminence which they were subsequently to attain and the curious series of accidents which linked their careers—Lord Althorp and William Lamb: at present they appeared to be moving in opposite directions, for Althorp was rapidly becoming 'a Whig and something more', whereas Lamb (who was at the moment without a seat in the House) was to fall more and more under the influence of Canning and Huskisson when he re-entered Parliament in 1816.

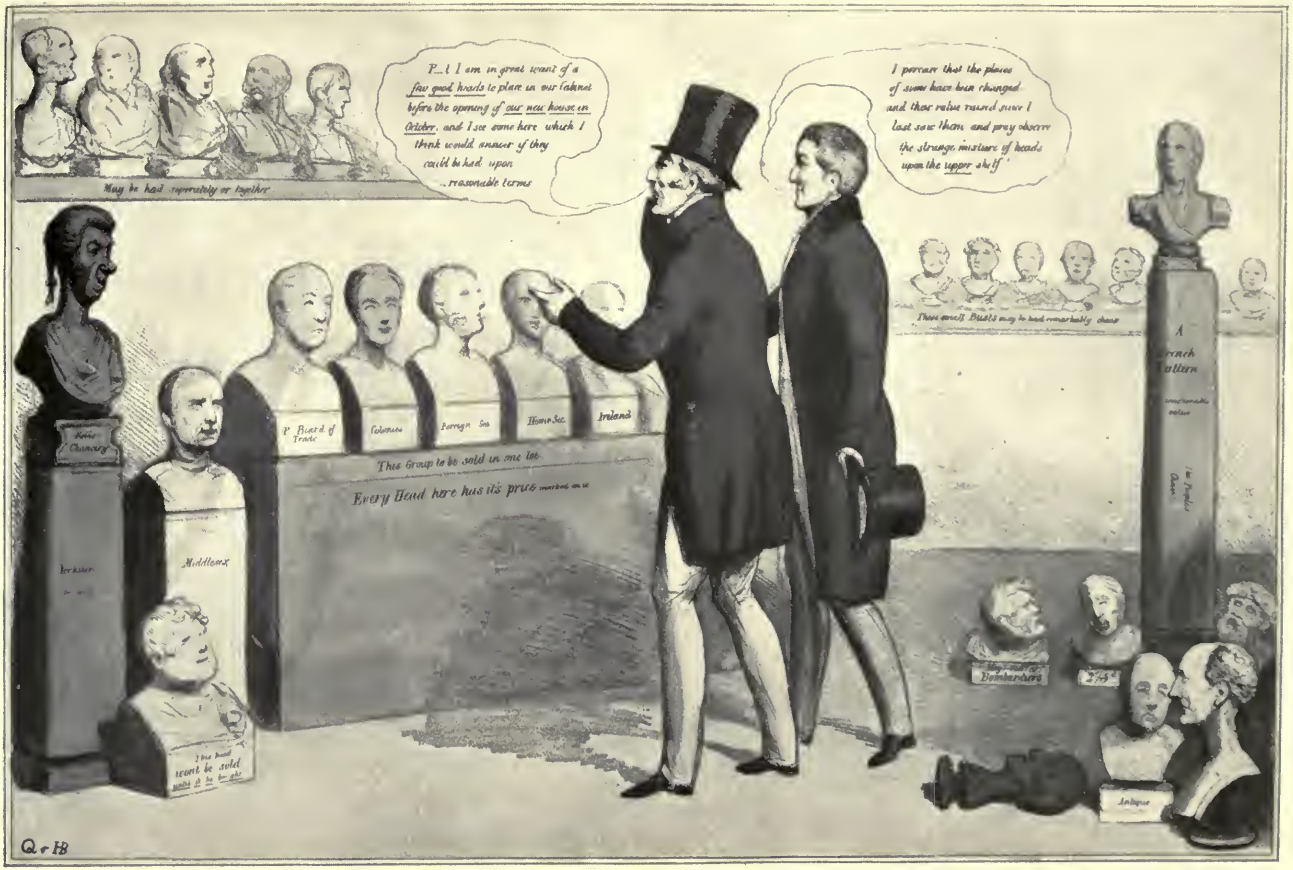
Joseph Hume was also without a seat in 1815, but after his return in 1818 he was a leader of the Radical party for thirty years. It was largely through his exertions that 'Retrenchment' as well as 'Peace and Reform' became a watchword of theirs, and his efforts in the cause of economy were both fruitful and unceasing. A financial reformer of prodigious industry had a fine field before him in 1815, and Hume's interests were by no means solely financial. It has been claimed for him that 'he spoke longer and oftener and probably worse than any other private member, but he saw most of the causes which he advocated succeed in the end': he would with good reason have been satisfied with the verdict.

Of the unofficial supporters of the Government Wilber-

force was by far the most influential, though he no longer represented the great constituency of Yorkshire: he was still at times to justify the opinion of Pitt—'Of all the men I ever knew Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence.' It was a significant testimony to his reputation that he was allowed the unenvied privilege of trying in 1820 to settle 'the Queen's business'. The great achievement of his life was over, but he was indefatigably urging Castlereagh to secure the fruits of his victory in crushing the slave trade for good and all. But in his view 'Party, Party is our bane', and neither side could claim his support with certainty.

Such were the leading members of the Parliament over which Mr. Speaker Abbott continued to preside, studying human nature from that congenial eminence, and, it may be presumed, remembering occasionally that famous night when Dundas had been condemned by his casting vote, and the tears had been seen to run down the face of Mr. Pitt beneath the hat which he crushed upon his head.

For the rest the political game was played much according to the present rules, and the Opposition had no doubt that its duty was to oppose. Lord Campbell records that the Tsar during his visit to England, while full of admiration for our institutions, noticed one thing which rather puzzled him. As the object of both parties was of course the same—the public good—he did not exactly understand why the Opposition might not privately give information and advice to Ministers, secretly telling them what measures they should avoid and what they should adopt. Ministers would derive the same advantage from these friendly conferences as from debates in Parliament, and there would be no altercation, exposure, or *éclat*. This was chiefly addressed


May be had separately or together
P_t I am in great want of a few good heads to place in our Cabinet before the opening of our new house in October, and I see some here which I think would answer if they could be had upon reasonable terms
I perceive that the places of some have been changed and their value raised since I last saw them and pray observe the strange mixture of heads upon the upper shelf
These small Busts may be had remarkably cheap
P Board of Trade
Colonies
Foreign Sec
Home Sec
Ireland
This Group to be sold in one lot
Every Head here has its price marked on it
Middlesex
Yorkshire
Bombardiers
Antique
Q & HB

to Grey, who did not know well what answer to return. His Majesty then turned suddenly round to Grenville and said : ' Qu'en pensez-vous, milord ? ' Grenville observed that the plan appeared very beautiful, but he doubted whether it was practicable. His doubt has been shared by his successors on both sides of the House.

IV

THE ROYAL FAMILY IN 1815 AND ITS POLITICAL POSITION

The sons of George III were:

1. *George, Prince of Wales; married 1795 Princess Caroline of Brunswick, who died 1821. Their only child, Princess Charlotte, died 1817 (wife of Leopold of Saxe Coburg Gotha).*
2. *Frederick, Duke of York; married 1791, died 1827 without issue.*
3. *William, Duke of Clarence; married Princess Adelaide of Saxe Meiningen 1818; succeeded as* King William IV, *and died without issue.*
4. *Edward, Duke of Kent; married Princess Victoria of Saxe Coburg 1818, died 1820, leaving one daughter, who succeeded as* Queen Victoria.
5. *Ernest, Duke of Cumberland; married 1815; succeeded as King of Hanover 1837, and died 1851 leaving issue.*
6. *Augustus Frederick, Duke of Sussex; died unmarried 1843.*
7. *Adolphus, Duke of Cambridge; married 1818, died 1850, leaving issue.*

The King also had six daughters of whom three were married and died childless. It will be observed that three of the Royal brothers married in the year after the death of Princess Charlotte.

IV

BUT if the politicians of the period and their methods were of a type which may not unfairly be regarded as normal, it is important for us to remember that the task of carrying on His Majesty's Government was in those days rendered infinitely more difficult by the personal characteristics of the Court.

The King, of course, had for some years been out of his mind and his character had ceased to have any influence on the conduct of affairs, except in so far as the tradition of deference to his scruples in the matter of Catholic Emancipation served as a convenient pretext for that shelving of the matter of which they were in fact the historical origin. No one who has ever seen the terrible picture of him in these days is likely to forget that tragic bearded figure, or to think of him without pity, as they remember the sturdy English figure of Farmer George, or the sprightly young king who nearly sixty years ago had flirted in Kensington Gardens, under the benevolent auspices of the first Lord Holland, with his charming niece Lady Sarah Gordon-Lennox. His misfortunes are surely enough to atone for his mistakes: he was now suffering from the cruel kindness of those who loved him. How cruel that kindness could be is hinted in a letter from his daughter, Princess Elizabeth. Writing to Lady Harcourt a few years before this date she says, 'The first question the Council put to Sir Henry Halford and Dr. Robert Willis was "Do you think that by throwing buckets of water upon your patient's head he would be cured?" They answered that no regular bred physician could venture such an expedient, particu-

larly my Father being blind, and at his time of life they could not answer for the consequences.' The poor old man spent most of his time at Windsor, which is quaintly alluded to by another of his daughters as 'that spot in which my most *valuable* and respectable Father is *incircled*'.

Of the Prince Regent, of whom no good can be said, the less said the better, though this was not the reason which caused Landor to choose the Latin language wherein to enshrine his qualities in one tremendous epitaph:

Heic.jacet,
Qui.ubique.et.semper.jacebat
Familiae.pessimae.homo.pessimus
Georgius.Britanniae.Rex.ejus.nominis.IV.
Arca.ut.decet.ampla.et.opipare.ornata.est
Continet.enim.omnes.Nerones.

Two sentences of Greville's, if less epigrammatic, are as complete: 'A more contemptible, cowardly, selfish, unfeeling dog does not exist' . . . 'He is a spoiled, selfish, odious beast, and has no idea of doing anything but what is agreeable to himself, or of there being any duties attached to the office he holds.'

The mischief he wrought in his family and among his friends was greater than that he was able to do among his political servants: for this result we have largely to thank the Duke of Wellington, who after his return to England in 1817 and subsequent entry into the Ministry rapidly established a dominion over his feeble character which saved the country from its worst results. The Duke was the one man of whom, whether as Regent or King, he stood in undeniable awe, and though the Duke of Cumberland could at times rouse his jealousy of 'King Arthur' he never failed to return to his allegiance. There are few finer studies in constitutional loyalty than

to watch the Duke's dealings with King George whom he detested, King William whom he despised, and Queen Victoria whom he honoured as well as served. It was not in her reign but under a stormier sky that he developed his famous doctrine, that the one thing of supreme importance was the carrying on of the Government of the Crown.

It is idle to speculate whether this happy result would have been anticipated if Princess Charlotte had lived. The tears which she is alleged to have shed on hearing that the Whigs had failed to form a Cabinet in 1812 were certainly the first that ever fell from Royal eyes on such an occasion, and the verses in which Lord Byron applauded them made her not unnaturally the idol of all the party of Liberty. Under the wise guidance of her husband Leopold she might well have anticipated the discoveries in constitutional theory which her cousin was to make under the same tuition; but it was not to be, and her death in 1817 left the nation faced with the formidable possibility that George IV would be succeeded by one of his brothers when the time arrived for Landor's epitaph to be inscribed upon his urn.

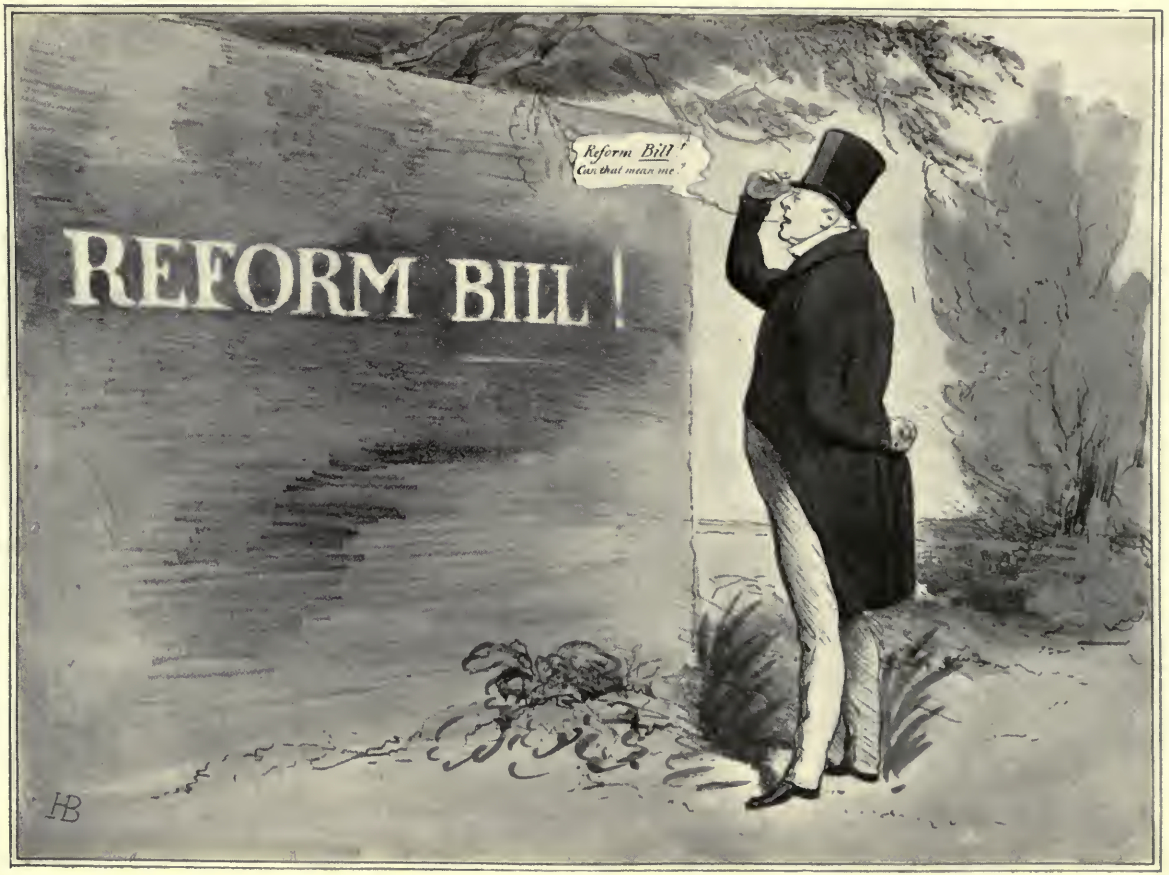
Of the Duke of York, his eldest brother, little need be added to what has been already said. He deserved the abuse he received as much and as little as he deserved the eminence which makes him Nelson's rival on his column in York Place. Greville, who managed his racing business in his last years, gives a not unattractive picture of his private life, but his action in politics, and in particular his violent tirade against Catholic Emancipation in 1825, afford little confidence that he would have made a wise or indeed a constitutional monarch.

Lord Eldon, while rejoicing that his firmness and boldness had placed him on a pinnacle of popularity,

could not but regret that he spent so much time at Newmarket and so many nights at cards, 'among which we know that there are *knaves* as well as, what are better company for him, kings and queens'. Whatever his faults, he deserves that it should be remembered that in the judgement of a great military historian it was he more than any other individual who made the army for the Duke of Wellington to command. This is a safer distinction than any to which he might have aspired as a Protestant King.

The Duke of Clarence was not a character to inspire enthusiasm, though it is hardly possible to question that he could and did inspire affection. His extreme simplicity and his unaffected pleasure in the Crown when it fell to him are characteristics with which no one can fail to sympathize. His conduct as King was far wiser than either his friends or his enemies could have anticipated, and he emerged not without credit from those difficult constitutional situations which his reign presented. At present his reputation was merely that of a rather excitable elderly sailor with a discreditable private life and a passion for public speaking, and it was excusable to look forward with alarm to the moment when the destinies of England might depend on the decision of 'one of the silliest of men'.

The Duke of Cumberland was the real and serious danger to the throne. It is not too much to say that his accession would have quite possibly marked the end of the monarchy, and a glance at the genealogical table will show how near in 1817 that danger was. The Royal marriages of 1818 saved us from it with such absolute success that we have forgotten its reality. His political activities were uniformly disastrous, and he was dangerous at Court from his powers of ridicule, the one thing


REFORM BILL!
Reform Bill!
Can that mean me?
HB

(according to the Duke of Wellington) of which George IV stood in dread: as to his private life it might be enough to quote Tierney's reply to a member of Parliament who said that he did not believe one half of the reports against him. 'If you believe one half', was the retort, 'you must have a worse opinion of him than of any other human being.' But Tierney was a Whig, and Whigs had no cause to love the Duke of Cumberland. It was his own brother who once summed up his character in a terrible answer to Wellington who had asked the reason of his unpopularity: 'Because there never was a father well with his son, or husband with his wife, or lover with his mistress, or a friend with his friend, that he did not try to make mischief between them.'[1]

It should be remembered that he was assiduous in his attendance in the House of Lords, being in fact for at least twenty years its most regular member, and his luxuriant whiskers and moustache were as familiar there as they are in the political caricatures of the period. He spoke little and inaudibly, but his presence made itself felt and never for good. When Lord Brougham, who was habitually unscrupulous in his choice of language, referred to him as 'the Illustrious by courtesy', it was felt that for once his rudeness was excusable: it is characteristic of the Duke that he treated the insult with indifference, for his pose in the House of Lords was that of the mild and reasonable statesman, and the methods by which he worked were the more dangerous for being indirect.

The Duke of Sussex had as early as his seventh year been locked up in his nursery and sent supperless to bed by order of his royal father for wearing Admiral Keppel's election colours. To this early predilection for the Whigs he was unswervingly faithful, and their historians have

[1] Greville, *Memoirs*, ch. v.

paid not unnatural honour to his originality and good sense. Even the most fervid Tory cannot deny that his picture in the National Portrait Gallery shows a face far more intelligent than those of his elder brothers. Unlike the Duke of Cumberland he was an easy and fluent speaker, and his enormous form (for he was one of the tallest and stoutest men in the country), clad in a blue coat and light knee-breeches, was familiar both at public meetings and in the House of Lords.

The other members of the Royal family call for no comment, though the memory lingers fondly over the Duke of Cambridge, who summed up the family attitude towards the Ten Commandments by responding in place of the Kyrie, 'Quite right too, but very difficult sometimes,' though it is on record that to one Commandment he answered: 'No, no; it 's my brother Ernest does that.'

'Silly Billy', the Duke of Gloucester, and cousin of the Regent, calls also for kindly mention. It is recorded that on seeing a naval officer with a much-tanned face and hearing that he had been nearly to the North Pole, he exclaimed: 'By G—d, you look more as if you'd been nearly to the South Pole!' But his turn was to come, and when he was told that King William had assented to the Reform Bill, he cried triumphantly: 'Who's Silly Billy now?'

Enough has been said to show that the task of a loyal Ministry was not easy. The consciousness that so far as personal considerations went they must be held to be defending a bad cause accounts for much of the severity with which they punished libellous attacks. By doing so they exposed themselves to obvious and well-deserved criticism, but it is difficult to maintain that an attack on the personal character of the sovereign is justifiable merely because it is true. The law of libel puts limits,

strange to the lay mind, on the right of private individuals to tell the truth about one another: the limits must obviously be more strict when the public interest is concerned, and it is possible to sympathize both with those who suffered for libelling the Regent and with those who had to conduct the prosecutions. There are few people who are heartily sympathetic with the vices of others, and fewer still who enjoy defending them in public against an acute and exasperated critic. If considerable acrimony was displayed in prosecution it is allowable to conjecture that, human nature being what it is, it was largely caused by disgust at the position in which the prosecutor found himself.

It has been necessary to dwell on this point at some length because it is one of the most salient exceptions to the general similarities between those times and our own with which we have been dealing. If at the present day a Minister finds in the Crown the strongest bond of empire and the surest champion of constitutional practice he should never forget the difficulties he has been spared: he will pay tribute to the memory of Lord Melbourne, Sir Robert Peel, the Duke of Wellington, and the Prince Consort, but he will reserve his chiefest gratitude for the greatest servant of the British Constitution in Queen Victoria.

V

THE SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS OF 1815 AND THEIR EFFECT ON PARTY POLITICS

V

In a sketch which professedly concerns itself with party politics it would be impossible to deal adequately with the social and economic condition of the country. It is a common complaint that Parliament lacks the knowledge and the sympathy to legislate in such matters, and if that complaint has any justification now it was, of course, abundantly true in the days that followed Waterloo. 'The people of England', said Sir Harry Vane on the scaffold, 'have been long asleep: I doubt but they will be hungry when they awake.' They had slept for 150 years since Sir Harry's day, but they were beginning at last to turn in a sleep which the French Revolution abroad and the industrial revolution at home were combining to make uneasy and impossible. It is becoming increasingly clear that the political student of the future will be more occupied with the early beginnings of working-class political thought than with the debates in an unreformed House of Commons: he will linger more readily in the library of Francis Place, the tailor of Charing Cross, than over the pages of the *Anti-Jacobin*. But for the purposes of this sketch the condition of the people is only of concern on the comparatively rare occasions when it forced itself upon the notice of Parliament, and overthrew the calculations of party leaders. The historian may, in his capacity as a citizen, regret the fact that these occasions were so rare, but it cannot be denied that before 1835, at which date our survey closes, social and economic questions play a comparatively small part in the party game.

Political economists limited themselves to the gloomy reflection that the cause of distress lay in the tendency of population to increase beyond the means of subsistence, though few went as far as Mr. Fax in *Melincourt*, who saw the only remedy in ' a universal social compact binding both sexes to rigid celibacy ' until the prospect improved. He was right, however, in tracing much of the poverty to the action of the old Poor Law, which induced the poor to ' marry by wholesale without scruple or compunction, and commit the future care of their family to Providence and the overseer '. When the experts could give so little guidance it is not surprising that the average politician was equally destitute of a policy.

Individuals of real philanthropy were to be found on either side of the House, but neither Whig nor Tory had as yet envisaged the problem as a whole : both sides dealt with distress as an administrative matter, and the Tory Home Secretary, Peel, was as much or as little stirred by sympathy with the sufferings of the poor as the Whig authors of the Poor Law of 1834. The truth is that neither side could bring more than platitudes to bear on the situation : it was a little wiser to urge the need for Liberty than to maintain the necessity of Order, but Liberty was too vague a panacea for the needs of the time, and of sound economic doctrine both parties were as yet innocent. The philosophic historian will rejoice or repine, according to his mood, at the reflection that sympathy is a monopoly of neither political creed : but if he takes a deeper view he will be bound to admit that wealth and power have a lamentable effect in blinding their possessors to the misfortunes of others, and that the new merchant aristocracy was proving itself at least as selfish as the landed aristocracy of the past. A cynic, who was reminded of all that the English nation owed to

Greece, Rome, and Palestine, is recorded to have said that we had learnt from the Greeks to be indifferent to the sufferings of the poor, from the Romans to be indifferent to the sufferings of animals, and from the Jews to rejoice over the sufferings of our enemies. There is too much in the history of the twenty years after Waterloo to justify his cynicism.

But if the social conditions of England as a whole lie outside our province, there is one great English institution which played a political as well as a social part. The Church of England was a great political force: it is a lamentable fact that in this period its political influence was almost uniformly bad and its social effect negligible. A few words are necessary to explain a fact which few will be disposed to deny.

The Church of England suffered from two causes which have never failed to undermine the influence of any religious body: it was rich, and it was closely allied with a political party. The latter misfortune may be held to date from Laud, who, in the words of one of his admirers, 'deliberately identified the cause of the Church with the cause of the King': the doctrine of passive obedience was a political doctrine, and, after the Revolution, while the Broad Churchmen became Whig the High Churchmen retaliated by becoming violently Tory. The religious stagnation of the eighteenth century was largely due to the fact that 'earnestness' came to be regarded as a symptom of Jacobitism. Those times were past, but the evil lesson had been learnt, and in course of time the Church had inevitably drifted into an alliance with the ruling and wealthy classes.

For its wealth was undeniable: the *Extraordinary Black Book* published in 1831 told a story of non-residence, pluralism, and excessive revenues which was in the main

unanswerable, and its disclosures had much to do with the reforms made by the Ecclesiastical Commission of 1835.

Besides these two general causes the Church suffered from that evil legacy of the eighteenth century which did much to harm its philosophy, its science, its politics, and its economics as well. The eighteenth century was atomistic: it dealt with things and people in isolation, and the same causes which prevented politicians from having a wise social and economic policy limited the clergy to dealing with individual souls. Individualism was the keynote in religion as in politics, and those earnest clergy (and there were many of them) who were occupied in saving sinful souls from Hell were unlikely to take much interest in social conditions. The careless were corrupted by their prosperity; the earnest overwhelmed by the tremendous consideration of the future destiny of the soul. 'The religion of the Evangelicals was not corporate nor social: the love of souls was their motive and separation from the world their method': the Clapham sect made a noble use of their own wealth, but rather as individuals than as members of a society. The first founder of the High Church party, Thomas Sikes of Guilsborough, was right when he said that the article of the creed which was most neglected was belief in the Holy Catholic Church and that the neglect led to great confusion: he was right also when he added that yet more confusion would attend its revival.[1]

To say this is not to deny the existence of much real devotion: Miss Austen's clergy are no more completely typical than her young ladies: no doubt there were many of the latter who had other thoughts than matrimony, just

[1] F. Warre Cornish, *History of the English Church in the Nineteenth Century*, Part I, p. 66.

as there were many of the former who were not solely occupied with thoughts of their livings and their patrons. Peacock's clergy, Dr. Folliott and Dr. Gaster, Mr. Portpipe, Mr. Larynx, and Mr. Grovelgrub, are rather survivals of the eighteenth century than products of the nineteenth. Their names betray their characteristics: the four tastes of the Reverend Doctor Opimian were a good library, a good dinner, a pleasant garden, and rural walks: the Reverend Mr. Portpipe endeavoured to exorcise the ghosts of Melincourt Castle with the invariable apparatus of a large venison pasty and three bottles of Madeira; and the Reverend Doctor Gaster when taunted with the fact that the Church 'never loses sight of the loaves and fishes' was contented to reply that 'it never loses sight of any point of sound doctrine'. Dr. Folliott, for all his learning, was out of sympathy with the modern demand for its encouragement among the poor, holding that though 'robbery perhaps comes of poverty, scientific principles of robbery come of education'.

Peacock was frankly a satirist, and the poets, the economists, and the philosophers fare no better at his hands than the clergy, but Crabbe had every reason for drawing them with a sympathetic hand, and it is he who describes the parish priest as—

> A jovial youth, who thinks his Sunday task
> As much as God or man can fairly ask:
> The rest he gives to loves and labours light,
> To fields the morning and to feasts the night.

There is no conceivable reason why a clerical historian should minimize the failure of his Church one hundred years ago: he will rather be disposed to take courage from the fact that when the first Bishop went to India in 1814 he was urged by Archbishop Manners Sutton to show 'no

enthusiasm' and faithfully obeyed the monition; and that English missionary enterprise as a whole is barely a century old. He will record with pride that, though the first impulse came from the Quakers, it was in the main members of his Church who won freedom for the slaves, and that the first step towards the education of the people came from the creation of the National Society by the Church in 1811. He will have no desire to palliate the failures of the past, but he will hold that a body cannot have been wholly without life which has adapted itself to such new conditions and been so well able to learn from its mistakes. Wealth, at any rate, is not the danger of the Church to-day, and its power is asserted in better, because less respectable, surroundings than those of the House of Lords.

The new century was to see a changed atmosphere of thought: evolution in science, socialism in politics, and that emphasis on the corporate side of religion which we have learnt to call 'Churchmanship' are closely akin, but it was not till the latter half of the century that any of these doctrines won its way to prominence. The evil which the eighteenth century did lived after it, and politics and religion had a slower convalescence than literature, which was already finding new things to say and new words in which to say them. The famous Duchess who objected to religion invading the sanctity of private life was a worthy successor of the great Bishop who had told John Wesley that 'the pretending to gifts of the Holy Ghost is a horrid thing, a very horrid thing', and neither attitude prepares the way for enthusiasm in social causes.

The conclusions of this chapter may be summarized by saying that during the period with which we are con-

cerned neither the social nor the religious conditions of the country had any direct effect upon party politics. The poor had no vote, and neither party was prepared to give them one: the vote of the Church was the safe possession of the Tory party, and neither the voteless nor the safe voters claim much of the thought of the average leader.

The privileges of the Church were destined, as will be seen, to become a party question, with the inevitable result that they were defended and attacked with equal unfairness: for this result the authorities of the Church must bear the principal blame. The social conditions of the country were as yet saved from that lamentable fate, though only by the general ignorance of social and economic theory which prevailed on both sides. Humane politicians like Lord Althorp had learnt from Sir Samuel Romilly 'not only what a stupid spirit of conservatism but what a savage spirit the French Revolution had infused into the minds of his countrymen': he and other Whig politicians did their best to protest against undue coercion, and to urge the reform of the criminal code, but Lord Althorp, with all his virtues, was not the man to discover a real cure for the evils of the time. And the other side were not savage nor fundamentally stupid: Peel was to prove himself a good friend to the weaker members of society; but we look in vain for a statesman with imagination enough to realize and prescribe for the changed conditions of a new era. The reforms in the commercial and criminal codes made by Huskisson and Peel, the educational schemes of Brougham, the middle-class Reform urged by Burdett and Russell, were excellent in their way, but they did not go far to meet the case. There was an element of patronage both in Whig and Tory natures which ignored the real gravity

of the problem, and unseen by politicians and ignored by official churchmen there were coming into existence those Two Nations which Disraeli was unsparingly to describe in *Sybil* when the day for reconciliation had gone by.

VI

THE DOMESTIC RECORD OF LORD LIVERPOOL'S MINISTRY UNTIL CASTLEREAGH'S DEATH

The following are among the chief domestic events between 1815 and 1822:

1816. *Riots in the Agricultural districts of the East of England.*
December. The Spa Fields Riots.

1817. *The Habeas Corpus Act suspended.*
The 'Sidmouth circular' to lords lieutenants on libellous publications.
The 'Derbyshire insurrection'.
November. Death of Princess Charlotte.
December. Trial of Hone for libel.

1818. *The Habeas Corpus Act again in force.*
£1,000,000 voted to build new churches.
July. Strike of the Lancashire cotton spinners.

1819. *Peel appointed Chairman of the Committee on the resumption of cash payments.*
August 16. Peterloo.
The Six Acts.

1820. *Death of George III.*
General Election resulting in little change.
February 23. The Cato Street Conspiracy.
June. Arrival of the Queen in England.
August to November. Proceedings against the Queen.
Retirement of Canning.

1821. *July 19. The Coronation.*
August. Death of the Queen.

1822. *Peel goes to the Home Office.*
The Grenville Party join the Ministry.
August 10. George IV sails for Scotland.
August 12. Castlereagh's death.

VI

THE setting of the stage and the leading *dramatis personae* having been thus roughly described, it is time to consider how Lord Liverpool and his Government played the parts assigned to them. It is impossible to remember without an effort that he was Prime Minister for fifteen consecutive years, a tenure only exceeded by Walpole and Pitt; there can be no one else who in fifty-seven years of life has passed almost thirty-four of them in office. His earlier career had been distinguished, for he had served as Foreign Secretary and had been largely responsible in another capacity for the support given to Wellington;[1] as Prime Minister he was by some considered as the incarnation of respectability, by others as the Arch-mediocrity; the two verdicts are not irreconcilable.

From 1815 to 1829 the question of Catholic Emancipation was in one form and another the chief underlying problem in English political life; Lord Liverpool's Government had been avowedly formed on a basis of compromise on the point, and this compromise was a weakness both to the Government and the Opposition; there was no other subject which led to so sharp a cleavage, for the Whigs were as yet far from united on the degree of Parliamentary Reform which was desirable and were very anxious to avoid being confounded with the Radical agitators. It will be convenient to postpone both these

[1] Sir Spencer Walpole's method of chronicling Liverpool's loyal support of Wellington is characteristic; 'it was his good fortune as Secretary of State for the Colonies to supervise the operations of the Peninsular Campaign'; such is the gratitude of political opponents for a great public service!

topics for later and more detailed consideration, but the former must never be left out of account in its constant effect both on the actions of politicians and on their opinions of one another.

The first questions which the Ministry had to face were naturally financial, and we are not likely to deny our sympathy to those members of the public who found to their disgust that the end of the war was not to bring complete remission of the income-tax ; we may envy the ignorance of those happy days when the suggestion to halve an income-tax of 10 per cent. was scouted as inadequate, but the Opposition had clearly the letter of the law on their side, and Brougham was able triumphantly to quote the pledge ' for and during the continuance of the war, *and no longer* ' which had been used at its imposition. Lord John Russell could imagine ' no more dreadful calamity for this country than the continuance of the tax in question ', and Vansittart was compelled by an Opposition which took full advantage of the forms of the House to abandon the proposal and abolish it altogether. As has already been suggested, sound finance was in those days imperfectly appreciated, and Vansittart was not the man to expound clearly the obligation to pay debt when his hearers represented those who would be the main sufferers from the tax in question. The distress in the country was great, no doubt, but the classes which suffered most had no property to be taxed, and a stronger Chancellor of the Exchequer would have stood his ground, maintaining that the landowners who were now suffering from the fall in prices had had every opportunity of making money during the long period of unnatural inflation.

The real trouble was due to causes equally familiar to us—the cessation of the fictitious demand for labour,

agricultural and other, which had existed during the war, and the consequent unemployment; to this was added the throwing on the labour market of discharged soldiers and sailors, and, to crown all, one of the worst harvests in our history. Wages fell, and the price of food rose; and it was inevitable that the blame should be laid on the old Government and the new machinery.

There was no doubt justification for both complaints; the blessings of machinery are very thoroughly disguised from those whose labour they supersede. The country was now in the throes of the Industrial Revolution—a phrase so familiar to us that we are apt to forget how gradually it came and how completely its significance was hidden from the politicians of that generation. No doubt a really wise Government would have seen the need for legislation, but there are very few Governments which have ever been really abreast of the ordinary economic wisdom of their generation, still less in advance of it, and there was no man of genius on either side of the House to compel attention to the subject. It is fairer to blame the general dullness of the national conscience, and in particular the Church, than those who sat in Parliament, for that failure to appreciate the needs of the time for which we have been paying so dearly ever since. The Government had at least the excuse. that they had been occupied with very pressing business for the last twenty years; the Church had no such excuse. We have hinted already at some of the reasons of its failure and of the general apathy on social topics; for the present it can only be said that the Parliamentary debates of the period seem to us who have reason to deplore the fact to be mainly concerned 'with names and words and matters of the law'.

The particular 'matters of the law' which a series of

reformers such as Romilly and Mackintosh urged on the attention of the Commons were mainly connected with the criminal code. And here the Government would appear to be without excuse; under the guidance of Lord Eldon it constantly opposed the most reasonable reforms, and defended the capital sentence for absurdly trivial offences; men long continued to be liable to the capital sentence for being 'Egyptians remaining in England for more than a month', or for pretending to be Greenwich Pensioners; for blackening their faces, or breaking down the heads of fishponds; for stealing goods worth 40*s*. from a dwelling house, or goods worth 5*s*. from a shop.[1] The contemptible excuse alleged was that the full penalty was in fact seldom executed. Lord Campbell's story of the man executed by mistake because the usual reprieve did not, through an accident, arrive is in itself a refutation of the theory—though as late as 1830 a thousand bankers found it necessary to petition that forgery should cease to be a capital crime as they could get no forgers convicted.

The distress of the country, which had taken in many places the form of breaking the new machines to which it was ascribed, led to some so-called Luddite riots in 1816, and in the same year the Radicals organized a great demonstration in Spa Fields. The placard summoning the meeting gives an idea of the feelings of its promoters:

> The present state of Great Britain.
> Four millions in distress!!!
> Four millions embarrassed!!!
> One million and a half fear distress!!!
> Half a million live in splendid luxury!!!
> Our brothers in Ireland are in a worse state.
> The climax of misery is complete—it can go no farther.
> Death would now be a relief to millions.

[1] Walpole, *History of England*, ii. 68 ff

It ended in some disorder, and the Lord Mayor found it necessary to collect troops. These disorders tried the nerves of a Government which had no policy for social legislation. Sidmouth, on whom lay the responsibility for preserving order, was not the least nervous of the Ministry, but, given his limitations, it is difficult to blame him for the course he took. He appointed a secret committee to investigate the situation, and it is at least a proof of his impartiality that he invited the Duke of Bedford, one of his most prominent opponents, to serve on it. 'The Duke', says a friendly biographer, 'availed himself of the excuse of an attack of illness to refuse to serve,' preferring to blame the Ministry on general grounds; but Lord Grenville, another prominent Whig who accepted the invitation, was convinced by the evidence he heard, and joined in recommending legislation to prevent seditious meetings and for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, which was accordingly suspended for a year.[1]

Its restoration in 1818 was followed by the first strike on anything like the modern scale (among the cotton-spinners), and the distress in the country showed no signs of abating; in the next year it bore dramatic fruit in the celebrated affair of Peterloo. This assembly of 80,000 unarmed people, which was dispersed by a Yeomanry charge with upwards of 400 casualties (of

[1] Lord Grey complained that 'the rights of the people of England were suspended like the cash payments of the bank' on worthless evidence of intended risings, but the dangers of the time cannot have been entirely imaginary when we find level-headed men like Palmerston and Peel arranging in 1815 to nail 'strong boardings' behind the fanlights over the doors of their London houses, and for their 'servants to meet the first discharge of stones with a volley of small shot from a bedroom window'.—*Sir Robert Peel* (Parker), i. 168.

whom more than a quarter were women), deserves all the celebrity it has achieved. It is not necessary to maintain that its promoters were wise; Brougham, who had certainly no reason to exaggerate, declared that their proceedings were unjustifiable; nor can it be maintained that those who dispersed them were of set purpose brutal; far worse brutalities were carried out in the name of law in the years which followed as well as in those which preceded. But no single incident so clearly brought home to the mind of the middle classes of the country the legitimate grievances of the class below them. The men and women who met there were patently excluded from all the rights of citizens; 'they were refused representation, education, liberty to combine in answer to the combination of their masters'. 'The law existed solely for their repression and punishment.'[1]

It was the feeling that this was intolerable rather than any special iniquity in the proposals themselves which led to the outcry against Castlereagh's famous Six Acts. To the student of the present day they seem curiously innocuous, where they were not futile. The rights of public meeting and of carrying or possessing arms are clearly rights which a Government may at times think fit to suspend; and those which encouraged prosecutions for blasphemy and libel certainly did more harm to those who used them than to those against whom they were directed.

[1] Mr. Chesterton has, I believe, remarked that, whether or not the battle of Waterloo was won on the playing fields of Eton, the battle of Peterloo was certainly won there. No one would grudge him his epigram, nor deny that it has a *substratum* of truth, but a Head Master of Eton may be forgiven for observing that the only Etonian who is in fact mentioned in prominent connexion with the affair is Lord Fitzwilliam, who was dismissed from the Lord Lieutenancy of Yorkshire for sympathizing with its victims; he was a faithful follower of Fox, whose friendship he had made at school.

It is a significant sign that the Government was not at the moment in a blind fury of reaction that at this very time Lord John Russell found a favourable reception for the first of his practical proposals of Reform; he introduced it with little hope of acceptance, but immediately after his proposal of some general resolutions in favour of the punishment of corrupt boroughs Castlereagh rose to express his complete willingness to disfranchise the particular borough (Grampound) in which corruption had been proved.

This seemed a good omen for the future, but the year 1820 was destined to dash all such hopes to the ground. In February the insanely criminal Cato Street Conspiracy gave the alarmists very real cause for alarm; while the death of the old King a month earlier was fated to plunge the country in a short time into the sordid and discreditable tragi-comedy of 'the Queen's business'.

The actual episode can be dismissed in few words. Queen Caroline was vulgar and indiscreet; her conduct, if not actually criminal, was of a levity and folly which it is impossible to defend; nor would any have been found to champion her cause had she not suffered from the unspeakable misfortune of being the wife of George IV. The student of physiognomy who studies their portraits in the National Portrait Gallery will realize their incompatibility and its excuses.

The King on his side was determined not to acknowledge her, and clung with a pathetic insistence to his demand that her name should not be included in the Liturgy. The Queen refused to yield, though Wilberforce did his best to induce her to compromise on this point, perhaps feeling, as her counsel truly said, that she was already included in the prayer for the afflicted and distressed. The King commanded his Ministers to

prosecute; in an evil hour for their reputations they consented; it is difficult to see what their motives can have been except a mistaken loyalty to the Throne, for there was no prospect that if they had refused King George would have applied to their opponents, since the Queen's complete innocence was an article of Whig faith; the Opposition leaders were not blind to the fact that (as Lord John Russell wrote to Tom Moore) the Queen's business had 'done a great deal of good in renewing the old and natural alliance of the Whigs and the people, and weakening the influence of the Radicals with the latter'. The trial dragged on, illuminated by some brilliant speeches and one immortal epigram;[1] but the majority for the Bill of Pains and Penalties fell so low on the third reading that Lord Liverpool thankfully abandoned it. The Queen appeared to have triumphed, but the public had tired of her cause, and after a vain attempt to interrupt the coronation she returned home to die; the Ministry incurred a final disgrace by its indecent efforts to disturb her funeral procession.

The whole story would be of little public importance except as an illustration of royal profligacy, ministerial weakness, and public fickleness, had it not been that it entirely occupied the time of Parliament for a year and led to the retirement from the Ministry of Mr. Canning. He had been a friend of the Queen's and felt bound to dissociate himself from the steps taken against her;

[1] Denman, the Queen's counsel, in an unlucky moment concluded his speech by urging that even in the case of detected guilt a possible verdict was 'Go and sin no more'. The epigram ran:

> Most gracious Queen, we thee implore
> To go away and sin no more;
> But, if that effort be too great,
> To go away at any rate.

his friends saw in his action a sensitive conscience, his enemies a still more sensitive appreciation of the political atmosphere, and a desire to avoid the discredit which the action of the Government was bound to bring. But in days when promotion depended so largely on the favour of the Crown it required considerable courage to give such definite cause of offence.

His departure was in some degree balanced by the accession of Peel to the Home Office; he had in the interval since his retirement from Ireland in 1818 done good service as Chairman of the Committee on the Resumption of Cash Payments. It was mainly through his influence that payment in gold was ordered in 1819 and completely re-established by May 1821. As Home Secretary he had a great opportunity of proving his powers as an administrator, and his first great work in England was the complete reform of the Criminal Code; he soon found it possible to abolish the capital penalty for a hundred felonies for which his predecessor Sidmouth had retained it.

Some further reconstructions in the Ministry gave it some additional strength, and a good harvest in 1821 propitiated more than one important section of the people; the omens, except in Ireland, were not unfavourable when Castlereagh (now Lord Londonderry), his mind unhinged by long overwork, took his own life, as two very dissimilar politicians, Whitbread and Romilly, had done a few years before.

Some attempt has been made to claim for Castlereagh the place which he deserves in the gratitude of his country, and more will be said of him when we come to deal with his work as Foreign Secretary. Those who knew him best spoke of him most warmly, and even his opponents in Parliament referred to his death with

sympathy and regret. He is one of those statesmen, not uncommon in our history, who have dominated the House of Commons by character and not by eloquence. 'In his ordinary mood', says Wilberforce, 'he was very tiresome, so slow and heavy, his sentences only half formed, his matter so confined, like what is said of the French army in the retreat from Moscow when horse, foot, and carriages of all sorts were huddled together helter-skelter; yet when he was thoroughly warmed and excited he was often very fine, very statesmanlike, and seemed to rise into quite another man.' His verdict is perhaps tinged by gratitude for what Castlereagh did for the slaves (often forgotten, as Wilberforce said, 'in shabby complimenting of Canning'), but the gratitude of such a man for such a reason is in itself no mean possession.

So far the Liverpool Government had been influenced, consciously or unconsciously, by the effects of the crisis through which the country had passed. The qualities which win a war are not necessarily those which best direct a country's affairs in time of peace, and to have been preoccupied with the concerns of Europe is not the best education for governing England. It must also be remembered that 'the Queen's business' had wasted the time of Parliament for a year, but when all allowances have been made their record at home is disappointing. Peel's advent to the Home Office had already marked the beginning of a better era, and it is prejudice rather than justice which sees in Castlereagh's death the removal of the one great obstacle to progress.

VII

LORD LIVERPOOL'S MINISTRY AFTER CASTLEREAGH'S DEATH (1822–7)

The following are among the chief domestic events between 1822 and 1825 :

1822. *Vansittart and Bathurst (friends of Lord Sidmouth) resign their offices, though the former remains in the Cabinet.*

Robinson and Huskisson (friends of Canning) become respectively Chancellor of the Exchequer and President of the Board of Trade.

1823. *Peel reforms the Criminal Code.*

The marriage law is reformed : the financial system simplified by Robinson and reciprocity introduced into the Navigation Laws by Huskisson.

Austria repays 2½ millions of War debt.

1824. *The National Gallery founded.*

George III's books acquired for the British Museum.

The Combination Acts repealed.

Strikes in Glasgow.

1825. *A new Combination Act forbidding all associations except those for settling a fair rate of wages.*

Great prosperity followed by a financial crash in December.

1826. *A Bill introduced to prevent the issue of notes for less than £5 : it is ultimately confined in operation to England.*

General distress : destruction of machinery.

The Ministry authorized to admit foreign corn.

General election, resulting in little change.

VII

At the time of Lord Londonderry's death George IV was engaged in a visit to Scotland, of which the most memorable result was the enthusiasm it aroused in Sir Walter Scott. It was on this occasion that he begged His Majesty as a supreme token of favour to present him with the glass which had been touched by the Royal lips to be preserved as a family treasure. Such a request addressed to George IV attired in full Highland garb (as was the fat London alderman who attended him) throws much light on the dangers of the romantic temperament when applied to politics, and Conservative Scots will remember with more favour his other petition that Mons Meg should be restored to Edinburgh Castle. It is comforting to think that Sir Walter soon forgot his priceless relic, and having consigned it to his tail pocket had sat upon and broken it before he could exhibit it to the milder eye of the poet Crabbe, who happened at the moment to be his guest.

The candidates for the vacant place and the leadership of the Commons were Peel and Canning, and it was clear that much would depend on the choice, for on the fundamental question of Catholic emancipation they took opposite sides. Lord Liverpool was now, as always, anxious to preserve the balance; when Canning left him he had, to the disgust of the extreme 'Protestants', admitted some of Lord Grenville's followers to the Ministry, though Lord Eldon had been somewhat consoled by the promotion of 'Orange Peel' to the Home Office; but the present decision was more momentous. Canning was just about to embark for India as Governor-General, and the King made no secret of his desire to get him out of the country; it appears to have been the Duke of

Wellington who, with a characteristic disregard both of his personal inclinations and those of his section of the party, induced George to consent to his appointment to succeed Castlereagh as Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Commons. Peel was still only thirty-two, and though he was rapidly acquiring a position in the House, he was not (if we may trust Brougham's autobiography) as yet regarded with much alarm by his opponents, who were contemptuous of 'Spinning Jenny' (Peel) while they feared as well as hated 'the Joker' (Canning). The Duke, no doubt, saw the need of strengthening the Government in the Commons, and there is no reason to suppose that Peel resented the decision. Disraeli says of the Duke's letter recommending Canning to the King that 'nothing more noble and nothing more skilful was ever penned by man', and he may be right in thinking that 'it must have raised and re-established, at least for the moment, the lax and shattered moral tone of the individual to whom it was addressed';[1] but it required more than occasional exhortations, however eloquent, to make any permanent impression upon George IV.

The five years on which we now enter are those in which Canning asserted himself as the leading spirit in the Government; his main achievement was naturally in the sphere of foreign policy, which will be discussed later, but it is the moment to attempt some account of his personality. The task is a very difficult one, for his name has remained after his death, as it was in his life, the battle-cry of contending parties. It is impossible to deny that he was ambitious; like Aristotle's hero, 'he thought himself worthy of great things, being in fact worthy', but it must be allowed that his ambition had at times an unfavourable influence on his conduct; he was disliked and distrusted by such different persons as the

[1] *Life of Disraeli*, v. 145.

Duke of Wellington and Lord Grey, and, if their hostile attitude towards him was dictated by instinct rather than by reason, the condemnation is all the more serious. Landor's verdict is characteristically bitter : *ob perfidiam in amicum et collegam praecipue memorabilis.* For the hostility of the average party politician it is easy to account ; he was a man of genius and imagination, and no such man is ever happy among the Tadpoles and Tapers : he found no party ready made with which he could conscientiously act, and he died before he had had time to consolidate a party of his own. Thus it is that he has been abused both by the Tories, whom he helped to deliver from the theory they had previously held, that all innovation was to be met with the same hostility which we had shown to the aggressive innovation of the French ; and by the Whigs, who owed primarily to his brief Ministry the re-established credit which gave them power in 1830. Both parties have entered into the fruits of his labours, but he was not ' a safe man ', and in their lifetime at any rate such men are the party idols. Growing minds on either side of the House were encouraged by his fine thinking, and both Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli claimed his political heritage ; it was ample enough for both, but the two great Etonians form the less congenial pair. Canning's mind, brilliant rather than earnest, was occupied at least as much with personalities as with principles, and Disraeli would have appreciated his humour more and minded his theatricality less than Mr. Gladstone, despite the eloquent passage in which the latter acknowledged his debt. ' I was bred ', he said in the days of his greatest eminence, ' under the shadow of the great name of Canning ; every influence connected with that name governed the politics of my childhood and of my youth ; with Canning, I rejoiced in the removal of religious disabilities, and in the character

which he gave to our policy abroad; with Canning, I rejoiced in the opening he made towards the establishment of free commercial interchanges between nations; with Canning, my youthful mind and imagination were impressed.'

An antithetic summary of his qualities written forty years ago has not lost its truth. 'No one trained in mere literature was ever more reasonable; few men that have made a profession of debate have been more veracious; very few of the statesmen bred in the close atmosphere of cautious antipathy have been so serviceable to freemen and enthusiasts. He was despised by some Whigs; of these there were some who were, in character if not in style, his superiors. If they could do without him when living, they were after his death constrained to enter into his bequest of political efficiency.'[1]

He was 'trained in mere literature', and no Etonian can ever forget his services to the cause of the lighter journalism; he stands at the head of the wonderful succession of English Prime Ministers—Derby, Gladstone, Disraeli, Salisbury, Rosebery, Balfour, and Asquith—who have shown that literary distinction can be combined with the highest political honours.[2]

[1] *A Guide to Modern English History* (W. Cory), i. 174.

[2] And it must not be forgotten that the Duke had a fine command of English. Brougham once said of his Despatches that they would be remembered when he (B.) and others were forgotten. 'Aberdeen told the Duke this, and he replied with the greatest simplicity "It is very true: when I read them I was myself astonished, and I can't think how the devil I could have written them".'—Greville, *Memoirs*, ch. ii.

His famous reply, when asked by the Government in 1840 whether he had any objection to Napoleon's body being brought from St. Helena, shows a natural instinct for style. 'Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington presents his compliments to His Majesty's Ministers. If they wish to know Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington's opinion as on a matter of public policy, he

As a speaker he has perhaps more fame than he deserves; Wilberforce, a very competent critic, denies that his qualities were first-rate: 'Oh, he was as different as possible from Pitt and from old Fox too, though he was so rough; he had not that art *celare artem*. If effect is the criterion of good speaking, Canning was nothing to them, for he never drew you to him in spite of yourself. You never lost sight of Canning.' The criticism holds good of more than his oratory.

The domestic annals of the country were not much affected by the change in the leadership of the House. The almost annual motions for Reform of one kind and another met with steady opposition from Canning, and though those in favour of the Roman Catholics could now count on his support they only once found favour with the House of Commons. The Cabinet was still, as Brougham contemptuously said, like a harpsichord in which the black notes alternated with the white. Huskisson, the new President of the Board of Trade, developed a more enlightened commercial policy, carrying out reforms which had been anticipated by Wallace, a reformer whose name has been forgotten; he reformed the Navigation Acts, allowing foreign vessels to enter British ports freely in return for equal privileges abroad, and by simplifying and reducing many protective duties prepared the way for the Free Trade policy of the future.

The new Chancellor of the Exchequer found his lot cast in pleasant places, for trade was beginning to revive and he acquired the nickname of Prosperity Robinson—a preferable title to that of Goody Goderich which he was soon to bear.

must decline to give one. If, however, they wish only to consult him as a private individual, Field Marshal the Duke of Wellington has no hesitation in saying that he does not care one twopenny damn what becomes of the ashes of Napoleon Buonaparte.'

It may be doubted whether he earned the former name by his own exertions, and he certainly was as much surprised as any one else when in 1824 Austria announced her intention of paying 2*s.* 6*d.* in the pound on her debt of six millions incurred during the great war; it is permissible to hope that some such surprise may be in store for the present generation. He is entitled to the credit of having persuaded the House of Commons to employ half a million pounds on building churches, and £300,000 on rebuilding Windsor Castle. The Round Tower then elevated by Wyatt is a standing challenge to Mr. Ruskin's principles, and has given so much pleasure to the eye that it is impossible not to forgive it for being hollow. Some of the remainder was spent in a manner which requires no defence by acquiring Mr. Angerstein's pictures for the National Gallery, and thereby laying the true foundation of that great collection.

But if the Chancellor cannot claim great praise for the country's prosperity as little can he be blamed for the financial crash which, as so often happens, followed in 1825 on the expansion of trade. This disastrous period would have no more claim on the memory than other similar times but for the fact that it was in this winter that Sir Walter Scott 'came through cold roads to as cold news' and formed that resolution which is the greatest of his glories. *Woodstock*, at which he was working at the time of his financial ruin, was the first of those novels, written amid every circumstance of domestic misfortune, which enabled him before his death to clear off £70,000 of debt by working at them often for fourteen hours a day. In the following year (1826) he was roused by what seemed to him an unjustifiable attempt to assimilate Scottish banking practices to those of England, and assailed the Government in letters published over the signature of

Malachi Malagrowther. Whether he was right or wrong on the financial point, no one will grudge him the triumph he won or think without pleasure of the chance which it gave him to write in his *Journal*, 'On the whole I am glad of this burlzie so far as I am concerned; people will not dare to talk of me as an object of pity—no more "poor-manning". Who asks how many punds Scots the old champion had in his pocket when

> He set a bugle to his mouth
> And blew so loud and shrill
> The trees in greenwood shook thereat,
> Sae loud rang ilka hill?'[1]

The years which had followed the death of Castlereagh had not been marked by any revolution in the domestic policy of the Government. As the war faded into the background the fear of revolution at home became less formidable. Peel and Huskisson were sound administrators, and had succeeded in carrying with them their less liberal colleagues; there were no two men in the country who were better fitted by training and temperament to carry out reform in administration. The Irish question and the Reform question were regularly discussed and as regularly shelved. Principles were at a discount, but trade was reviving. The old Combination laws which had prevented workmen from uniting disappeared without a struggle in 1824, though the strikes which followed led to their re-enactment in a less objectionable form in 1825. The period is one of typical Tory government: uninspired by large ideas, but fruitful in useful reform—the eminently characteristic reward of a Prime Minister at once so useful and so uninspiring as Lord Liverpool.

[1] *Journal*, i. 141.

VIII

THE EVENTS OF 1827: A TURNING-POINT IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARTIES

THE MINISTRIES OF 1827

Canning Ministry (1827, April 10–August).

First Lord of the Treasury / *Chancellor of the Exchequer*	*George Canning.*
Lord Chancellor	*Lord Lyndhurst.**
Home Secretary	*W. Sturges Bourne.†*
Foreign Secretary	*Earl of Dudley.**
Lord Privy Seal	*Duke of Portland.†*
Treasurer of the Navy / *President of the Board of Trade*	*W. Huskisson.†*
Master of the Ordnance	*Marquess of Anglesey.**
Secretary at War	*Lord Palmerston **
Secretary for War and Colonies	*Viscount Goderich.†*
Lord President of the Council	*Earl of Harrowby.*
Irish Secretary	*William Lamb.**
President of the Board of Control (India)	*Charles Wynn.**
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland	*Marquess Wellesley.**
Under Secretary for the Colonies	*Edward Stanley.**

Goderich Ministry (August 1827–January 8, 1828).

First Lord of the Treasury	*Viscount Goderich.*
Lord Chancellor	*Lord Lyndhurst.*
Chancellor of the Exchequer	*J. C. Herries.*
Home Secretary	*Marquess of Lansdowne.*
Foreign Secretary	*Earl of Dudley.*
Secretary for War and Colonies	*W. Huskisson.*
Lord President of the Council	*Duke of Portland.*
Lord Privy Seal	*Earl of Carlisle.*
Master of the Mint	*G. Tierney.*
Commissioner for Woods and Forests	*W. Sturges Bourne.*
Secretary at War	*Lord Palmerston.*
Under Secretary for the Colonies	*Edward Stanley.*
Irish Secretary	*William Lamb.*
President of the Board of Control	*Charles Wynn.*
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland	*Marquess Wellesley*

* Held the same office under Goderich.

† A member of the Goderich Ministry.

VIII

THE year 1827, like the year 1820, was opened by a death in the Royal Family, and the death of the Duke of York was even more important in its indirect consequences than that of his father had been.[1] In him a sturdy champion of the Protestants was removed, and, though the King showed no signs of wavering, it was more likely that Lord Liverpool's successor would be chosen from the 'Catholic' members of his Cabinet whenever the necessity arose. The necessity was not long in coming, for the Prime Minister had a stroke in February from which he never recovered. The best tribute to his memory lies in the instant disintegration of his party after his retirement. Canning now felt himself strong enough to insist on the succession: Peel refused to serve under him on the ground that the complexion of the Government would inevitably be changed on the subject of Emancipation if the Prime Minister were an avowed 'Catholic'. His attitude was dignified and consistent, though two years were to prove that dignity and consistency may be bought at too high a price. Eldon and the Duke followed him into retirement, nominally for the same reason, but really from a personal antipathy to Canning, which broke out in some very ill-tempered correspondence. The

[1] His funeral may be said to have produced indirect results as important; for it was there that Mr. Canning caught the chill which accelerated his death. Lord Eldon saved himself from a similar fate by standing on his cocked hat, which suggested the lines:

> At sea there 's but a plank, they say,
> 'Twixt sailors and annihilation.
> Strange that a hat that moment lay
> 'Twixt Ireland and Emancipation!

former was not likely to admit that the Tory party stood in any need of educating, and the latter had not that confidence in Canning as an educator which he was to show later in himself and Peel. The other seceders were Tories of the ordinary type, and the party had missed its first great chance of developing its true policy under a leader of genius.

There was much justification for the ill humour which made a member of the Tory party write of the conduct of his leaders 'placing the man whom they wanted to destroy in the situation of being the protector of the Crown and the People does appear to me to be the greatest triumph of housemaidy spite over common sense that the world ever heard of!'[1]

The Whig party was also thought by some adroit party politicians to have made the great refusal in denying its support to Canning:[2] it is a truer verdict that the leaders acted wisely both in their own interest and in that of good government. They had come to realize that the party needed to be based on a real principle—on nothing less than the transformation of government from the administration of the King's business into a genuine attempt to represent the wishes of the governed. For the realization of this principle Reform was an indispensable preliminary, and to compromise that for Emancipation would have been to retard the process and that marshalling of opposed forces on which constitutional progress so largely depends.

[1] Sir Charles Bagot to G. Villiers April 24, 1827: *Life of Clarendon* (Maxwell), i. 51.

[2] 'Grey's conduct is, I think, very atrocious. He is doing what he can to ruin a Government which he knows would do a great deal for the cause of Liberality, that he may restore to power men who he knows are pledged and devoted to the cause of bigotry.'—Campbell to his brother, June 14, 1827.

Some of them, however, were prepared to form a junction Ministry, and Lansdowne as Home Secretary, and William Lamb as Secretary for Ireland, joined Huskisson on the liberal side of the Ministry. It might have been thought that the probability of justice being done to Ireland would have secured the favour of the party, if not its co-operation, but Grey was irreconcilable. He disliked Canning as much as Wellington did, and for similar reasons, to which was justifiably added Canning's record as an anti-Reformer, but it is difficult to excuse the violence of his attack on the new Ministry in the House of Lords, or to acquit him entirely of faction. He had himself suffered so much in the cause of Emancipation that he could not forgive the new Prime Minister for not insisting on the power to grant it, but his motives were largely personal.[1] In such circumstances Canning was forced to seek support wherever he could get it, and the appointment of the Duke of Clarence as Lord High Admiral was both a help for the present and a form of insurance for the future.

Copley, the new Chancellor, who took the title of Lord Lyndhurst, was a typical Tory of the new school, and as such was not unnaturally the object of bitter personal attacks. He was certainly one of the ablest men of his time, and might have played a leading part in our history if he had added to his splendid qualities of intellect the gifts of lofty purpose and severe integrity. The verdict of Disraeli, who knew him well, and owed much to him, is that 'His soul wanted ardour, for he was deficient in imagination. . . . He adapted himself to circumstances

[1] 'I do not mean that there was any resemblance between Canning and Castlereagh in personal character and conduct—God knows there cannot exist a greater difference between any two men, and I think it is in favour of Castlereagh.'—Grey to Holland, February 7, 1825.

in a moment, though he could not create or even considerably control them. . . . He had a mind equally distinguished for its vigour and flexibility'.[1] Lyndhurst's comment on himself, though spoken of his outlook on literature, holds good in politics: 'I see everything too calmly not to be open to conviction.' It is not surprising that opponents found harsher names for 'flexibility', 'openness to conviction', and 'adaptability to circumstances'. Even Lord Melbourne, the kindliest of politicians, was on one occasion moved to apply to Lord Lyndhurst the words once spoken of Strafford: 'The malignity of his practices was hugely aggravated by his vast talents, whereof God gave him the use, but the devil the application.'[2]

He had broken a lance with Canning over Catholic Emancipation while the Ministry was in process of forming, and his enemies alleged that he knew that the King, though he might tolerate a 'Catholic' Premier, would insist on having a 'Protestant' Chancellor. Passion had run high in the debate, especially over an allegation made by Canning that Copley had borrowed his arguments from Dr. Phillpotts of Exeter. Canning in his reply quoted the words of a well-known song:

Dear Tom, this brown jug that now foams with mild ale
Out of which I now drink to Sweet Nan of the Vale
Was once Toby Phillpotts.

[1] *Life of Disraeli*, i. 329, cf. p. 262.

[2] The jealousies of the legal profession provide posterity with some very pretty jesting. Lord Campbell quotes with relish the comment made in 1819, when Copley said he could see nothing to tempt him in the views of the gentlemen opposite: '"for *views* read *prospects*", whispered Mackintosh to John Russell;' Lord Lyndhurst forty years later had a question to propound to Lord Brougham: 'Brougham, here is a riddle for you: why does Campbell know so much about the Navigation Laws? Answer: Because he has been so long engaged in the Seal Fishery.'

The quarrel was reconciled in a letter of Canning's offering the Chancellorship 'Philipotto non obstante', and accepted by Copley with the signature 'as always (minus twenty-four hours) Yours very sincerely'.

It is probable that these two brilliant men understood one another better and appreciated each other more than their opponents thought either creditable or desirable.[1] But, though he had thus secured a valuable ally, Canning was assailed from both sides, and he was only allowed from April to August to consolidate his position and his party: his death cut short the great experiment, and his Ministry is interesting only for its unfulfilled possibilities.

Sir Walter Scott's record of his friend's death is the severe judgement of one who possessed conspicuously some of the qualities he missed most in Canning: 'The death of the premier is announced—late George Canning—the witty, the accomplished, the ambitious; he who had toiled thirty years and involved himself in the most harassing discussions to attain this dizzy height; he who had held it for three months of intrigue and obloquy—and now a heap of dust, and that is all.'[2]

His death must have awakened some remorse in Tory breasts, and Sir Robert Peel complained sadly that 'The odious fellow who writes in *The Times* talks of the vultures hovering round poor Canning's remains, and insinuates that we had all come up for the purpose of being at hand in the event of his death'. Twenty years later Disraeli's famous taunt of the 'candid friends'

[1] How good a judge Lord Lyndhurst was of the tendencies of political life may be judged from his reported saying that if he were to have his life again he would choose to be a journalist. Canning would have understood his meaning.

[2] *Life of Scott* (Lockhart), ch. 74.

at whose hands Canning suffered during his year of office had enough justice in it to pain a statesman whose attitude towards his brilliant rival had always and naturally been more correct than cordial.

The months during which 'the transient and embarrassed phantom of Lord Goderich' fluttered over the Parliamentary stage are not worth careful record. That amiable statesman was called upon by the King to supply the place which Liverpool had held with such success and Canning with such difficulty. He was far from equal to the situation, and 'then was seen' (if we may parody Napier's sentence) 'with what strength and lack of majesty the British politician fights'. The Whig section of the Cabinet complained that Mr. Herries, 'a Tory clerk', had been foisted into the Chancellorship of the Exchequer by the King's direct influence: there seems as little ground for this charge as for giving that contemptuous title to a very distinguished financier who had done excellent service in high positions. The Tories with better reason complained that to introduce Lord Holland was to commit the Cabinet in favour of Reform and to change its entire character. Huskisson was feeble: Palmerston and Tierney bitter: Herries dignified but obdurate, and Goderich distracted. He resigned his office without meeting Parliament. The Whigs, as usual, had the *mot juste* uttered on their behalf, in Sydney Smith's prayer, 'From Herrieses and schisms, Good Lord deliver us!'

The year 1827 marks a turning-point in the history of English parties. Had Canning lived and prospered the Tory party would have learnt to appreciate him as it learnt later on to appreciate Disraeli, and he would have found it as easy as his successor did to achieve one of those 'restatements' of Tory principles which good

Tories distrust and good Whigs despise, but which are necessary for any party which is to be a living force in the country. The fates decided otherwise: his life, or rather his accession to office, divided his party, and his death drove all its more enterprising members into the ranks of the Whigs, where they long remained to tinge with heresy the orthodox doctrines of their new allies—to be a source of strength with the country, but of internal division. No one in 1827 could have foreseen that Lord Palmerston was to prove for nearly forty years one of the most prominent members of the Whig Ministries of the future.

But before considering what that future was to bring it will be right to attempt some estimate of the influence exercised by Canning on British foreign policy and the extent of the change which he effected.

IX

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER CASTLEREAGH AND CANNING

The following were the leading events in foreign affairs between 1815 and 1830:

1818. *Congress of Aix la Chapelle.*
France evacuated by allied troops.

1820. *January. Revolution in Spain.*
July. Revolution in Naples.
August. Revolution in Portugal.
October. Congress of Troppau.

1821. *January. Conference of Laibach.*
February. Austria suppresses the Neapolitan revolution.
March. Greek insurrection.

1822. *April. Massacre of Chios.*
August. Death of Castlereagh.
October. Congress of Verona.

1823. *April. French invasion of Spain to suppress revolution there.*
Absolutist reaction in Portugal.
British consuls sent to South America.

1824. *England recognizes the independence of Buenos Ayres, Colombia, and Mexico.*
The Turks call in the Viceroy of Egypt to suppress the Greeks.
Death of Louis XVIII.

1825. *April. Siege of Missolonghi begins.*
December. Death of the Tsar.

1826. *Canning sends British troops to Lisbon to support the constitutional party.*
April. Missolonghi falls.
Anglo-Russian agreement about Greece.

1827. *August. Death of Canning.*
October. Battle of Navarino.

1829. *Treaty of Adrianople.*

1830. *February. Leopold of Saxe Coburg accepts the throne of Greece, but renounces it in May.*

The main difference in British foreign policy before and after the death of Castlereagh lies in the fact that he valued the Concert of Europe and was ready to make sacrifices to maintain it, while Canning's motto was expressed by him as being 'Every nation for itself and God for us all'.

IX

An indefinite amount of confusion is imparted into political affairs by the loose use of general terms. The caution 'dolus latet in universalibus' is at least as applicable to their use in politics as to their use in any other form of controversy. The party which has good cause to complain of the indiscriminate and abusive use of the word Socialism cannot object to being reminded that the word Liberty is capable of similar prostitution, and the Labour party will find itself before long compelled to reconcile its enthusiasm for Free Trade with its undeniable desire to restrict the freedom of labourers as well as the freedom of capitalists.

But in no sphere of politics has more confusion arisen from this cause than in that of foreign affairs. Politicians can be found who exalt 'non-intervention' into a virtue or a vice without reflecting, or at any rate without encouraging their hearers to reflect, that its quality must depend on the quality and cause of the intervention suggested, and the steps available for carrying it out. Isolation is neither 'glorious' nor 'inglorious' in itself, but expedient or inexpedient: co-operation is a blessed word in politics as it is in finance, but it is an elementary consideration that before praising or blaming we must weigh the measures with which we are asked to co-operate and the company in which we are likely to find ourselves.

These obvious cautions are needed before we approach the thorny problem of the foreign policy of the British Government between 1815 and 1827: it will be found

on examination that Lord Castlereagh was as unwilling as Mr. Canning to tie himself to a formula, and that the policy which under their auspices we pursued was sounder and more consistent than is usually supposed.

Our starting-point must of course be the Treaty of Vienna—that agreement of which Lord Salisbury remarked, 'It is discouraging for future pacificators to reflect that the treaties which have been so rich in the blessings of peace should have been the object of censure more unsparing and more pertinacious than has followed Lord North's most eventful blunders, or Napoleon's bloodiest excesses'. If he had lived to see our later peace, or perhaps to make it, he might have found encouragement in the reflection and not the reverse.

In our generation it is to be hoped that we shall not underrate the difficulties of making a peace at all: at any rate it is natural that Castlereagh, who had played so leading a part in the reconciling of diverse ambitions, should have felt it to be a settlement which should not lightly be disturbed.

It is needless for our purpose to enter into its provisions in detail: we are only concerned with the efforts of the English representatives, and they then, as now, were limited by the material in which they had to work. It is certain that their influence was used in the interest of forbearance towards France, and that it was their deliberate policy to restore her to a dignified position in the Concert of Europe, and to encourage her maritime and colonial interests, in the hope no doubt that she would not concentrate her forces on continental dominion. It has been claimed by a very able student of history that our policy was more generous and considerate than the policy of any military and victorious nation ever known.[1]

[1] Cory, *op. cit.* i. 35.

The Congress, it must be allowed, did not anticipate the demand for the unity of Italy, but we hear less at the present moment of its culpable failure to anticipate the need for the union of Germany, and our change of attitude should be a warning against asking from the statesman of one generation the solutions of the problems of the next. Castlereagh, as has been said, was an unimaginative man, and the peace was perhaps an unimaginative peace, but he was also a man of courage, honesty, and generosity, and the peace bears those characteristics too. He has as little as most peacemakers to fear from the fact that such treaties reflect the characters of those who make them. It should never be forgotten that it was through the exertions of the British representatives, witnessed with wonder and alarm by some of their colleagues, that the eight leading States of Europe agreed to enforce on behalf of the whole confederation the law condemning the slave trade: a great historian describes our crusade against slavery as being 'among the three or four perfectly virtuous pages comprised in the history of nations'.[1]

This was an auspicious beginning of that corporate action to which after a period of war the world instinctively looks with hope. It is instructive to consider what lesson the League of Nations can draw from the successes and failures of a hundred years ago. It has been customary to speak of the Holy Alliance as a reactionary league into which England was unwittingly drawn, to be rescued therefrom by the genius of Mr. Canning. More recent historians (Professor Alison Phillips and Professor Egerton) have established a truer view. It is clear that Castlereagh desired, in his own words, 'to inspire the States of Europe with a sense of the dangers they had surmounted by their Union', but he did not believe in

[1] Lecky, *European Morals*, i. 153.

the possibility of 'a Universal alliance for the peace and happiness of the world'. 'The idea of an *alliance solidaire*', he wrote, 'by which each State shall be bound to support the state of succession, government and possession within all other states from violence and attack, upon receiving for itself a similar guarantee, must be understood as morally implying the previous establishment of such a system of general government as may secure and enforce upon all Kings and Nations an internal system of peace and justice.' The Duke of Wellington, his likeminded partner, put the same idea in characteristically simpler language: 'Before we can guarantee anything we must know what it is.' Holding these views, neither of them was likely to be enthusiastic in favour of Alexander's scheme for applying the law of Christ to international relations, and Lord Lyndhurst's father, Mr. Copley, might have found an inspiring subject for one of his historical pictures in Lord Castlereagh presenting the programme of the Holy Alliance for the blessing of the Prince Regent. The blessing was duly given, but neither the Regent nor his Ministers took any other steps in furtherance of the scheme.

In fact, such danger as there was of an alliance of absolutists came not from the Holy Alliance but from the meetings of the Quadruple Alliance (a different body) at fixed intervals to discuss the affairs of Europe. The Holy Alliance in its early stages was indeed liberal in its tendencies, and was even an object of some suspicion to Castlereagh on that ground: the Quadruple Alliance as it developed after 1818 was the real danger to the liberties of Europe. This latter agreement affirmed that 'in order to consolidate the intimate tie which unites the four sovereigns for the happiness of the world the High contracting Powers have agreed to renew at fixed

intervals . . . meetings consecrated to great common objects'. The first conference was held at Aix la Chapelle in 1818, and Castlereagh (who had successfully urged the readmission of France to the Alliance) saw in it no cause for alarm: before it met again at Troppau in 1820 he had changed his view. Alexander had been driven by the mutiny of one of his picked regiments into the arms of Metternich, and the restored King of Spain was only too ready to push the claims of absolutism as far as he was allowed. Ferdinand (whose characteristic contribution to the sum of human learning had been the endowment of a Chair of Bull-fighting) was indeed a problem to those who had replaced him on his throne, and it must have been bitter to Castlereagh and the Duke of Wellington to realize in whose cause they had been innocently and inevitably fighting.

There was clearly a danger that the 'intimate tie' might bind us to support very unjustifiable actions in Russia, Italy, or Spain: Canning was perhaps the quickest to perceive it, but this is not to maintain that others were blind. Lord Liverpool, not usually credited with rapid intuition, wrote that 'the Russians must be made to feel that we have a Parliament and a public to which we are responsible', and Castlereagh was as unwilling as Canning could have been to embark on an absolutist crusade. A politician who wrote that he 'rejoiced that the King of Spain was not disposed to aim at the restoration of the ancient order of things' was little likely to take up arms to help him when he found to his disgust that his rejoicing had been premature.

He was consistent in deprecating interference by any one with the internal affairs of Spain, and the action which the French were allowed to take on behalf of absolutism there in 1823 was entirely contrary to his principles.

As for Italy, he felt unable to deny that Austria had interests in that country which entitled her to suppress revolution there, but he entirely dissociated England from the resolutions taken at the Conferences of Troppau and Laibach. There the autocrats had it all their own way and resolved that ' states which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the results of which threaten other states, *ipso facto* cease to be members of the European alliance '. This was clearly a very new and a very dangerous doctrine, for, as our generation has learnt by experience, it is extremely difficult to define when revolution in one country constitutes a threat to another ; and when the Powers bound themselves ' to bring back the guilty state to their bosom ', by arms if necessary, they were undertaking a duty from which we have seen good reason to shrink. In any case Castlereagh refused utterly to be a party to such a scheme. It is consistent with his general policy, and not an isolated act of Tory perversity, that one of his last efforts in diplomacy was to dissuade the Tsar from interference on behalf of the Greek revolt. It will be seen that he was a consistent opponent of intervention, as a man of his unimaginative temperament was likely to be, but to see in him a crusader for absolutism is a sheer mistake. He laboured for peace as the supreme interest both of England and of Europe, and had no sympathy with any who disturbed it, whether they did so in the name of Legitimacy or Liberty.

The Greek insurrection indeed offered a new series of problems, and it is as fortunate for our reputation that Castlereagh had not to handle it as it is lamentable that Canning did not live to reap the fruits of his more enlightened policy. The Greeks could not be regarded, except by the eyes of an extreme theorist, as subjects of

the Sultan in the same sense in which a Spaniard was subject to King Ferdinand or a Frenchman to King Louis. Castlereagh and the Duke were misled, not by theory but by their horror of war, into applying the same treatment to Greek aspirations after freedom as they offered to the problems of Spain, Italy, or France. It was absurd to regard a rising against an Asiatic tyrant as a domestic dispute about a constitution ; but until Canning succeeded to the direction of our foreign policy, and after his unhappy death, that was the attitude of our statesmen. The country, as a whole, was full of sympathy for Greece ; Byron's exploits and romantic death strengthened the appeal,[1] and the Turk was as usual careful to discount any sympathy for himself which might have been roused by the atrocities of the Greeks by still more fearful atrocities of his own. He may have felt a natural jealousy of the borrowing of his own methods ; in a truer sense he might have cried with Simon de Montfort at Evesham—' It was I that taught them.'

The Tsar was in a position of considerable difficulty : the absolutist mood into which the mutiny at St. Petersburg had driven him by 1820, suggested that he should see in the Sultan a legitimate monarch shamefully outraged ; but the traditions of his house and his position as the champion of the Eastern Church urged him in the other direction. He resembled the Prince-Bishop whose dilemma is so charmingly described by Mr. Ingoldsby :

> The Prince-Bishop uttered a curse and a prayer,
> Which his double capacity hit to a nicety,
> His princely or lay half induced him to swear,
> His episcopal moiety said ' Benedicite '.

[1] Byron died in 1824 on April 19—a day to become famous as Primrose Day in honour of a statesman of very different sympathies.

He temporized, as we did; for Canning's sympathies did not reach to the point of intervention, and it was only after his death that a treaty between England, France, and Russia to impose terms of peace led to the destruction of the Turko-Egyptian fleet at the battle of Navarino. If Canning had lived, that gallant exploit would never have been stigmatized as an untoward event, and it would not have been left to the Duke of Clarence as Lord High Admiral to express the nation's pride in the success. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Aberdeen (as Foreign Secretary) failed to follow it up, forfeited our leading position in the councils of the allies, and in spite of the remonstrances of Stratford Canning played a very feeble and half-hearted part in the establishment of the new Greek kingdom.[1]

It is here, and in our dealings with Portugal, that Canning left the clearest mark on our foreign policy. By sending troops to Lisbon in 1826 he made the first real breach in the traditional policy of non-interference, and he was abundantly justified, for he was helping not only the cause of liberty but that of our oldest ally, and helping it in a way and in a place which our command of the sea made specially appropriate. It is certain that neither Castlereagh nor Wellington would have taken such a step, and the pride with which he announced it in the House of Commons was amply justified.

On the other hand his celebrated declaration in the matter of the recognition of the Spanish colonies was more theatrical and had less justification. The recognition was in fact a protest against the French coercion of Spain in 1823, which, as has been seen, Castlereagh disliked as

[1] However, it is declared by those who have tried it that the phrase *Ἀγγλικὸς εἰμὶ καὶ φιλέλλην καὶ σύγγονος Λόρδου Βύρωνος* is still of value to the English traveller in Greece.

much as Canning could have done. The Duke's sentiments, though expressed after Castlereagh's death, would have been echoed by him—'I dislike the Spanish mutiny, revolution, and everything that has been the consequence, as much as anybody, but I dislike still more the conduct of the French Government' in wishing to suppress it by force. It was not suggested in any quarter that we should fight another Peninsular War to repel French Monarchists, and it was necessary to look for our retort elsewhere. To recognize the independence of the Spanish colonies was an obvious method of saving them from French influence; the Monroe doctrine (promulgated in 1823) made the decision easy; and there is no reason to doubt that any other Foreign Minister would have taken the same step, and for the same prosaic, and predominantly commercial, reasons. British trade with the colonies in revolt was free from Spanish restrictions and was therefore profitable; if the colonies reverted to their allegiance our trade would inevitably suffer. Mr. Canning's main contribution to the affair was the glamour of poetry and romance which he threw over a simple transaction having for its main motive the protection of British commercial interests. He had the defects of his temperament as well as his predecessor, and it cost him as little effort to be a trifle vainglorious in speech as it cost Lord Castlereagh to conclude one of his orations with the monosyllable 'Its'.

Our foreign policy between 1815 and 1830 does not then present those startling contrasts which some historians have professed to find in it. The map of Europe had not been recast: the treaties which we had been forced to make by the necessities of war had precluded any such idea. Peace had been restored and English influence was used to maintain it; but it is as absurd to accuse

Castlereagh of a willingness to sacrifice honour as it would be to accuse Canning of a readiness to sacrifice peace.

It is obvious that Canning cannot be regarded as the founder of the Whig foreign policy: he was Foreign Minister in a Tory Government, bitterly opposed by the official leader of the Whigs, and he was carrying out a policy which was in no sense inconsistent with Tory tradition. On the other hand, the Tories of his day allowed their opponents to make his policy their own, and allowed themselves to be identified with a dull sympathy with foreign governments which was in the strictest sense of the word unprincipled. That this was so was largely due to the personal influence of the Duke of Wellington, but in him, as has been seen, it was rather a personal horror of more war than a reasoned sympathy with absolutism. He had gone to the Conference of Verona in 1822 after Castlereagh's death as the emissary of Canning, who had not found it necessary to change the instructions given him by his predecessor, and there he had gladly withstood the assembled monarchs to their face. No one was less likely than he to entertain illusions as to their wisdom. On the other hand, he more than any other English statesman had realized the true meaning of war, and, as the disturbers of the peace were as a rule the Liberals in the various countries, he drifted more and more into the character of a supporter of the *status quo*. His unique position in his party reinforced that element of snobbishness which is always a Tory danger, and the rich heritage prepared by Canning passed into the hands of his opponents. There was much in it which was alien to their traditions, for the long experience of the French war had caused them to exalt 'non-interference' into one of those 'principles' which they instinctively seek. Navarino was no more popular with official Whigs than

with official Tories, and if the latter called it ' an untoward event ', Creevey, who was in close touch with Lord Grey, pronounces that ' a more rascally act was never committed by the great nations '. The ' unspeakability ' of the Turk was far from being an article of Whig faith, and Russia was not hailed as the champion of oppressed nationalities till a considerably later date.

Lord Palmerston was to cause many heart-searchings to his Whig followers, but they forgave him of necessity, for when he came over into their camp he brought with him the legacy of Canning, which appealed to Whig traditions of higher authority than the doctrine of non-interference. When Mr. Gladstone had invented the formula of ' nations rightly struggling to be free ' as deserving our support, he might seem to have reconciled the opposing principles, and naturalized Canning as a Whig. But the tradition of ' peace at any price ' does not easily die, and is supported by a selfishness as natural and as inexcusable as the snobbishness of the Tory. When a modern author speaks of

> The idiot who praises in enthusiastic tone
> Every century but this and every country but his own,

he is really describing two contrasted types of temperament, which have been the bane of the two contrasted parties: the idiot who praises bygone centuries is the domestic scourge of the Tories, but the idiot of the cosmopolitan type has led the Whigs and their successors into serious difficulties, and he is a greater danger just because he is as a rule a better man. The real condemnation of such a temperament is that it has made it hard for one great party to see that if our empire is indeed founded on the principle of freedom there can be no hostility between Imperialism and Liberalism. Liberals have lost much by the wanton surrender of the Imperialistic idea to

the Conservatives, just as the latter lost much ninety years ago by the surrender of Canning's policy to the Liberals. Canning's untimely death was the making of the modern Liberal party, just as his Ministry had threatened its extinction; the country's loss proved a party's gain.[1]

[1] Throughout this section I have been greatly indebted to Professor Egerton's masterly study of *British Foreign Policy in Europe* (Macmillan).

X

FOREIGN POLICY UNDER PALMERSTON

The following were among the leading events in foreign affairs between 1830 and 1835:

1830. *July. Revolution in Paris.*
August. Accession of Louis Philippe.
Revolution in Belgium.
November. Insurrection at Warsaw.

1831. *June. Leopold elected King of the Belgians.*
Russian invasion of Poland.
September. Fall of Warsaw.
Insurrection in the Papal States suppressed by Austria.

1832. *The French occupy Ancona as a protest against Austrian interference in Italy.*

1833. *Death of Ferdinand of Spain.*

1834. *Quadruple Treaty between Spain, Portugal, England, and France.*

Portugal throughout these years was disturbed by civil war, and a similar struggle began in Spain when Ferdinand's death left the succession there also disputed. The Sultan was driven by his difficulties with the Viceroy of Egypt to conclude a treaty in 1834, which gave Russia almost complete ascendancy at Constantinople.

X

It will be simpler to pursue our account of foreign policy before turning back to follow the exciting course of domestic history after Canning's death ; the years which intervened between that event and the accession to power of Lord Grey's Ministry present no special feature of interest in foreign affairs, for the Revolutions of July 1830 had to be dealt with in the main by the statesmen who entered office in the following November. This was certainly fortunate, for the Duke of Wellington, though no reactionary in foreign politics, had no sympathy with anything that could be called a revolution, and neither he nor Lord Aberdeen, his Foreign Secretary, would have been quick to appreciate the changes which the year was to bring.

The year 1830, however, witnessed the appearance of new problems and of a new figure at the Foreign Office. In France the Revolution of July was no doubt mainly personal in its origin, for it needed extreme stupidity on the part of Charles X both to provoke it and to fail to suppress it, but Louis Philippe has more than a personal interest, for he is the outstanding representative of those national monarchies, based on practical rather than sentimental grounds, which are suggested by the titles King of the French, King of the Belgians, and King of the Hellenes. The events in France gave the signal for the revolution in the kingdom of the Netherlands, where the fabric reared by the Powers at Vienna was to receive its first if not its rudest shock.

It is easy to be wise after the event, and to condemn the union of Belgium and Holland as unnatural and insecure,

but it must be remembered that the difficulty which it was intended to solve was a real and pressing one. No one in 1815 was prepared to contemplate the union of the Belgian provinces with France, and England was with good reason very nervous of any possibility that Antwerp, that 'loaded pistol held at the head of England', should pass into dangerous hands. Our statesmen in past centuries had had reason to congratulate themselves that French ambitions had led the nation to waste its strength in futile efforts to abolish first the Alps and then the Pyrenees, instead of pushing quietly and steadily over the flat country to the north-east; but Louis XIV and Napoleon had shown the way to that wiser policy. Nothing but the most heroic exertions had rescued us, and it would have been criminal folly not to have closed the stable-door now that victory had given us the opportunity, and left the horse still secure.

So Holland and Belgium were united and the Powers agreed to hope for the best. The hope was perhaps not unreasonable: difference of language and religion had not proved insuperable bars to unity in the very parallel case of Switzerland, and the allies entertained a charitable belief that the King of Holland would realize that policy as well as justice forbade him from oppressing his new subjects. Had they foreseen how completely that belief would be falsified they would perhaps have aimed at some form of Federal Union, but there were in 1815 fewer precedents available for that very difficult expedient.

In any case the milk was irretrievably spilt when the Belgians followed the example of the French in 1830: the Tories were still in office, and Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Wellington showed a tendency not only to cry over the result but to endeavour to reverse it. It is fortunate for us, and for Belgium, that at this moment

the direction of affairs passed into the hands of Lord Palmerston.

Lord Palmerston was now forty-six. He had been educated at Harrow, but it is no insult to that school, of which he was one of the most loyal sons, to say that the most important influence on his boyhood came from the fact that he spent much of that time in Italy and received much early instruction from an Italian refugee. At a famous period in his country's history his sympathy with Italy was to be of considerable effect, both in effecting its liberation and incidentally in holding together the Liberal party, by providing at least one subject on which he, Lord John Russell, and Mr. Gladstone could agree. Lord Shaftesbury, who knew him well, was to pay a high tribute to his character after his death; 'I admired, every day more, his patriotism, his simplicity of purpose, his indefatigable spirit, his unfailing good-humour, his kindness of heart, his prompt, tender, and active consideration for others in the midst of his heaviest toils and anxieties.' Coming from such a source the testimony outweighs many apparent instances of frivolity and lack of earnestness. He had now served for eighteen years in the financial office of Secretary at War, a post in which he had not distinguished himself by any great attention to economy, and he had had a brief experience of higher office under Canning and the Duke, from the latter of whom he had parted in some dudgeon, sharing George IV's opinion that 'in the Cabinet he was as weak and undecided as Goderich'. Of his general characteristics as a politician more will be said later: they are illustrated by his wish that the British soldier, whose destinies he controlled, should have 'a British character, British habits, and a British education, with as little as possible of anything foreign'. Holding this robust faith

in the superiority of our own products, he was generously anxious to see these blessings extended to less fortunate quarters of the world. The need was great, for though he no doubt thought better of some of our neighbours than of the Turks (' what energy ', he once asked, ' can be expected of a people with no heels to their shoes ? ') he found them all lamentably lacking in the qualities which he had learnt to value. No Englishman is likely to deny that he was right in his patriotic enthusiasm, nor in tracing our merits to those of our native institutions ; opinion will inevitably differ as to the degree of judgement he displayed in recommending both our qualities and our institutions to the notice of the foreign powers with whom he had to treat.

It cannot be doubted that his insularity made him very difficult to deal with ; even at the time when he realized clearly that Europe had been divided into two camps, and that the only chance of an effective opposition to Austria, Russia, and Prussia lay in the co-operation of England and France, he could never put out of his mind the belief that ' we have on the other side of the Channel a people who, say what they may, hate us as a nation from the bottom of their hearts, and would make any sacrifice to inflict a deep humiliation upon England '.

The characters of Louis Philippe and his ministers may have justified suspicion, but such a conviction on the part of our Foreign Minister did not make for warm co-operation. ' In our alliance with France ', he said on another occasion, ' we are riding a runaway horse and must always be on our guard ' : he prided himself on employing a light hand and an easy snaffle, but the horse is known at times to have entertained a less favourable opinion.

But whatever the defects of Lord Palmerston's tem-

perament may have been, in his dealings with the Belgian crisis he showed himself at his best. The Duke of Wellington may have been right in thinking that the King of Holland was unkindly treated, but it was his own impracticability which had led to the difficulty, and Palmerston's firm attitude both towards him and the French had much to do with the successful establishment of that Kingdom of the Belgians, to which the world has since owed so large a debt of gratitude.

In another quarter his reversal of the policy of his predecessors was less successful. The Foreign Enlistment Act of 1819 had been designed to prevent British volunteers from assisting revolutionary movements abroad. It had been the constant target of attack with the Whigs, and had been assailed by Lord Holland, Tierney, and Lord Althorp, on the highest liberal principles. It was repealed in 1834 in order to allow such volunteers to assist the constitutional cause in Spain, but the experiment, which resulted in a British contingent which was underpaid and half-starved, was not a success, and it can hardly be doubted that it created a situation very difficult to reconcile with strict neutrality. It is no doubt a violation of liberty to prevent Englishmen from assisting any cause they may approve, but a Government is primarily concerned with the due performance of its duty to other states. A regiment of Germans enlisted in Germany for service in South Africa during the Boer War, to give a simple instance, would have done considerably more harm than any telegram to President Kruger. In this respect Tory practice seems preferable to Liberal theory, and has indeed received the sincere compliment of imitation by its opponents.

It is, in fact, on his dealing with the Belgian crisis that Palmerston's early reputation as a Foreign Minister must

be held to rest: it is not altogether his fault that other difficulties proved incapable of so clear a solution. His instinct was to support the Liberal cause in every country in Europe: he sympathized with the constitutional parties in Portugal and in Spain, with the Poles in their insurrection of 1831, and with the subjects of the Pope in their rising of the following year; but Poland was at least as inaccessible then as it is to-day, and to interfere in Italy would have meant a war with Austria, which no one was prepared to undertake. The attempt to deal with the affairs of the Peninsula by the Quadruple Treaty of 1834 succeeded reasonably well in Portugal but failed in Spain; and no doubt it was difficult for a good Liberal to believe that there could exist a country like the latter in which absolute monarchy was a genuinely popular institution. The plain fact of the case was, and is, that there are comparatively few places in Europe where England can profitably intervene alone; there were more where England and France could intervene together, but with France, as has been shown, Palmerston found it difficult to act. The fault was not wholly on his side, but it was a mistake to keep Talleyrand waiting in an anteroom, and the mistake was characteristic. Before Palmerston left the Foreign Office in 1841 co-operation had ceased and we had drifted very near a French war. The Foreign Secretary would have done better to have recognized the limitations imposed on him, and to have refrained from expostulations with the Tsar which were treated with contempt. But Russia was rapidly becoming the *bête noire* of the British, and the Foreign Secretary was too good a Briton not to share the feeling; his distrust drove him into an unnecessary and disastrous patronage of Turkey—unnecessary because the Tsar had no desire to destroy a neighbour whose weakness was so convenient, and disastrous because the

Turks were no fit friends for a Liberal minister. Wellington was far-sighted enough to see that any treaty for the protection of Turkey was bound to involve us in complete responsibility for all its concerns. But the times were not easy; the revolutionary movements of 1830 had drawn closer together the three Eastern powers, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, whom the Greek War of Liberation had separated, and Palmerston's fears of absolutism were as well founded as his distrust of the shifting policy of France.

It must be allowed that during his first tenure of that Foreign Office which he was so long to dominate, Palmerston did invaluable service to his party by acclimatizing in it the wise policy of Canning, and his success was to prove one of its most precious assets in the party warfare of the next twenty years. He had owed much in that period to the wiser guidance of Grey, who either modified his policy or at any rate made it more acceptable to his colleagues.

Our foreign policy under Palmerston, as under Castlereagh and Canning, had an element of idealism in it which foreign observers then, as in later times, regarded as hypocrisy. No Foreign Secretary of ours has ever been found to acquiesce in the cynical definition of Europe as 'a number of wicked old gentlemen with decorations assembled in a room', and when a later cynic described a certain International Conference (held before the war) as suggesting 'St. Francis of Assisi playing Poker in the train on the way back from Epsom', he was not without precedent or justification in reserving the part of the Saint for the British Foreign Minister.

XI

THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON'S MINISTRY

THE DUKE'S MINISTRY IN 1828

Lord Chancellor	*Lord Lyndhurst.**
Lord President	*Earl Bathurst.*
Chancellor of the Exchequer	*Henry Goulburn.*
Chancellor of the Duchy	*Earl of Aberdeen.*
Secretaries of State — Home	*Robert Peel*
Secretaries of State — Foreign	*Earl of Dudley.**
Secretaries of State — Colonial	*William Huskisson.**
President, Board of Trade	*Charles Grant.**
Lord Privy Seal	*Lord Ellenborough.*
Secretary of War	*Lord Palmerston.**
Master-General of the Ordnance	*Viscount Beresford.*
India Board	*Viscount Melville.*
Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland	*Marquess of Anglesey.**
Secretary for Ireland	*William Lamb.**

Palmerston, Huskisson, Dudley, Lamb, and Grant retired in the course of the year and were succeeded respectively by Sir Henry Hardinge, Sir George Murray, Lord Aberdeen, Lord F. Leveson-Gower, and Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald.

Lord Anglesey was dismissed in 1829 and succeeded by the Duke of Northumberland.

* Members of the Goderich Administration.

XI

Our survey of foreign politics has carried us beyond the date of 1827, to which we must now return. Canning's death and Goderich's failure had left vacant the highest position in the State, and the Duke of Wellington, who had consented to resume the command of the Army under Lord Goderich, was now called upon to succeed him as Prime Minister. He had indignantly denied that there had been any such ambition in his mind when he broke with Canning—'Do your Lordships suppose that, having raised myself to the highest rank in the profession which I had previously followed from my youth . . . I could be desirous of leaving it in order to seek to be appointed the head of the Government, a situation for which I am sensible that I am not qualified, and to which, moreover, neither his Majesty, nor the right honourable gentleman, nor any one else wished to see me called? . . . My Lords, I should have been worse than mad if I had thought of such a thing.'

It is impossible to doubt that he meant what he said; on the other hand, being, as he was, 'the greatest man who was ever sincerely content to serve', he no doubt under-estimated the difficulties of the service he was now undertaking. Scott was right in saying that the Duke had had 'a bad education for a statesman in a free country'—not only because he was a soldier, but because his dealings with foreign countries, their sovereigns and their ministers, had not encouraged in him that belief in human nature without which it is impossible to believe wholeheartedly in free institutions. Since his return to

England he had known himself to be the one Minister who could control the King, and he regarded his duty too much from that point of view: he had never disguised from himself or his colleagues the 'many inconveniences and evils resulting from the King's habits and character', but he believed himself more fit to deal with them than any one else. It is difficult to deny that he was right; it was as necessary for a statesman to face those evils as the others with which the country was threatened, though our less personal view of political questions fails to make allowance for the fact. The Duke had at the moment some supreme qualifications for the post; he was a far better statesman than later generations have believed, though by no means so good as he was tempted to believe himself. Experience was to undeceive him, and he was in constitutional affairs one of the most teachable of autocrats. 'If I had known in January, 1828,' he was to write a few months later, 'one tithe of what I do now, and of what I discovered in one month after I was in office, I should never have been the King's Minister, and should have avoided loads of misery! However, I trust that God Almighty will soon determine that I have been sufficiently punished for my sins, and will relieve me from the unhappy lot which has befallen me. I believe there never was a man suffered so much; and for so little purpose.'

However, at the moment his eyes were blind, and he was ready at the call of duty to take up 'a most arduous situation and in most difficult times; a situation for the duties of which I am not qualified, and they are very disagreeable to me'.

Before we consider how these disagreeable duties were performed it will be worth while to endeavour to form some estimate of the personal characters of the Duke

and his great lieutenant, Sir Robert Peel, and of the relations between them.

His character as a soldier falls outside our scope, though it is right to say that the qualities which raised him to greatness in that capacity were by no means purely military. He was very far from being conservative either as a strategist or a tactician, and the best answer to Napoleon's celebrated dictum that he was *un mauvais général* is given in his own brief summary of the battle of Waterloo—'The French came on in the old way and we beat them in the old way.' The supreme originality of his conception of warfare in the Peninsula was at least as characteristic as the caution imposed upon him by the knowledge that he had in his charge the only British army, and had no hope of another if it were either defeated or suffered heavy loss. But those who most admire him as a soldier have seen little to praise in his personal character. 'It is the misfortune of the historian,' writes the last chronicler of the Peninsular War, 'that when he sees so much to admire and to respect he finds so little that commands either sympathy or affection.'[1]

This verdict is hard to understand: no doubt the Duke was not without a certain hardness of heart, and was often forgetful of the officers who had served him best, but he was far from forgetful of his non-commissioned officers and men, despite the hard words which he occasionally used of them. In his later days it is probably true that he had 'too much of everything and everybody always in his way to think much of the absent', and it is this concentration on the business or the person immediately before him which explains much of his success and of his failure. His marriage was a generous and characteristic mistake: no one but he would have been so ready to

[1] Oman, *History of the Peninsular War*, ii. 311.

honour a forgotten promise given a dozen years before, nor to scout the suggestion that he had better at least see the lady again; no one else would have allowed himself the outspoken reflection 'How damned ugly she is!' when the meeting did at last take place. His power for friendship was as undeniable as his readiness to take offence, and his kindness of heart as certain as his fundamental humility. The latter comes out curiously in his submission to the strictures of Bishop Phillpotts on his negligence as a Churchman, and the meekness with which he presents the excuse that owing to his deafness 'I never hear more than what I know by heart of the Church Service, and never one word of the sermon'. It is perhaps also the explanation of his amazing correspondence with Miss J——, a lady who wished to convert him, and to whom he wrote no less than 390 laborious letters.

But his devotion to duty, his honesty, and his complete unselfishness are in themselves enough to set his character high among our great men: few words are needed to illustrate either quality. Wilberforce, on hearing of the 'admirable zeal, perseverance, judgement, and temper' with which the Duke had conducted the anti-slavery negotiations at Verona and 'his plain-dealing honesty', adds as a comment, 'I shall love all generals the better for it as long as I live, and so I hope will my children after me'.[1] He forced himself to work at the most uncongenial tasks, and the masses of documents written in his own hand to the end show how fully he employed every hour. 'I don't like lying awake,' he said, 'it does no good; I make a point of not lying awake': and there was no one whose waking hours were more completely filled. The words which he wrote to Sir Robert

[1] *Life*, v. 153.

Peel in 1841 are true of the spirit in which he took office in 1829, though he no doubt had learnt something of his own limitations in the years between:. 'The truth is that all I desire is to be as useful as possible to the Queen's service—to do anything, to go anywhere, and hold any office or no office as may be thought most desirable or expedient for the Queen's service.'[1]

The recreations which he allowed himself were hunting and shooting, and it must be confessed that he made a poor show at either. 'His seat is unsightly in the extreme, and few men get more falls in the course of the year than his Grace,' writes an unfriendly critic; but it is Lady Shelley, his friend from childhood, who describes the shooting party at which the Duke wounded a retriever, hit the keeper's gaiters, and peppered the bare arms of an old woman who was washing clothes at her cottage window. It was on a similar occasion that Lady Shelley's mother made herself immortal by a brilliant exercise of maternal tact; her daughter was naturally alarmed and burst into tears. 'What 's this, Fanny?' exclaimed her mother. 'Fear, in the presence of the hero of Waterloo! Fie! Stand close behind the Duke of Wellington; *he* will protect you.' Her daughter confesses that she did not at the moment realize why it was the only safe place on the ground.

Sir Robert Peel shared some of the Duke's great qualities, and in particular his honesty; their appreciation of one another, though often impaired, rested mainly on this fact; as a politician he was, of course, as infinitely his superior as he was inferior in those characteristics which strike the imagination. To us he seems cold-blooded, and his lack of manners does him as much disservice with posterity as it did on a celebrated occasion

[1] *Sir Robert Peel* (Parker), ii. 461.

with the Court.[1] But he had the power of attracting friends; in fact the devotion of the Peelites to his memory, however well deserved, was to prove disastrous in the later years of the century. He had proved himself an able administrator, and both in Ireland and at the Home Office had left monuments of his skill and industry: the revision of the Criminal Code and the institution of the London Police had added to the credit he had won as chairman of the Committee on Cash Payments. He had a grasp of the fundamental principles of good government which was so firm as to be at times oppressive; there was some point in the criticism of Lord Brougham that in a crisis 'Peel would gravely and conscientiously put it down as a discovery that liberty is good and licentiousness is wrong'. He prided himself on his steadiness of purpose, and would have laughed if he had heard Lord Eldon's prophecy, 'The time will come when Mr. Peel will place himself at the head of the democracy of England and overthrow the Church.' No one who has studied his career will question the truth of the fine sentence in which Lord Rosebery takes leave of 'the great minister, with feet perhaps of clay as well as iron, but with a heart at least of silver, and a head of fine gold'. He was pre-eminently, as another eminent critic, Lord Morley, has called him, a man of 'skill, vigilance, caution, and courage'; all four gifts were to be needed during his association with the Duke.

The nature of their co-operation cannot be described by a single epithet, for it varied much from time to time. The Duke, as has been said, had the highest regard for his honesty: 'I never saw a man,' he said, 'who adhered more invariably to truth on all occasions.' On the other

[1] 'The fact is I have no small talk and Peel has no manners', said the Duke, *apropos* of the Bedchamber incident in 1839.

hand, we find him complaining in 1831 of 'that fellow in the House of Commons: one can't go on without him; but he is so vacillating and crotchety that there 's no getting on with him', though he adds, 'I did pretty well with him when we were in office'. This criticism is due no doubt in part to the impatience of a slower mind which is asked to adapt itself to more subtle processes of thought, but also to Peel's curious neglect of consulting his distinguished partner. If the Duke had a weakness, as Arbuthnot used pathetically to say, it was that he enjoyed being consulted; Peel declared that nothing in private life gave him half so much pleasure as communicating freely and unreservedly with the Duke of Wellington, but as Lord Rosebery has remarked, he showed a singular self-denial in availing himself of this gratification.

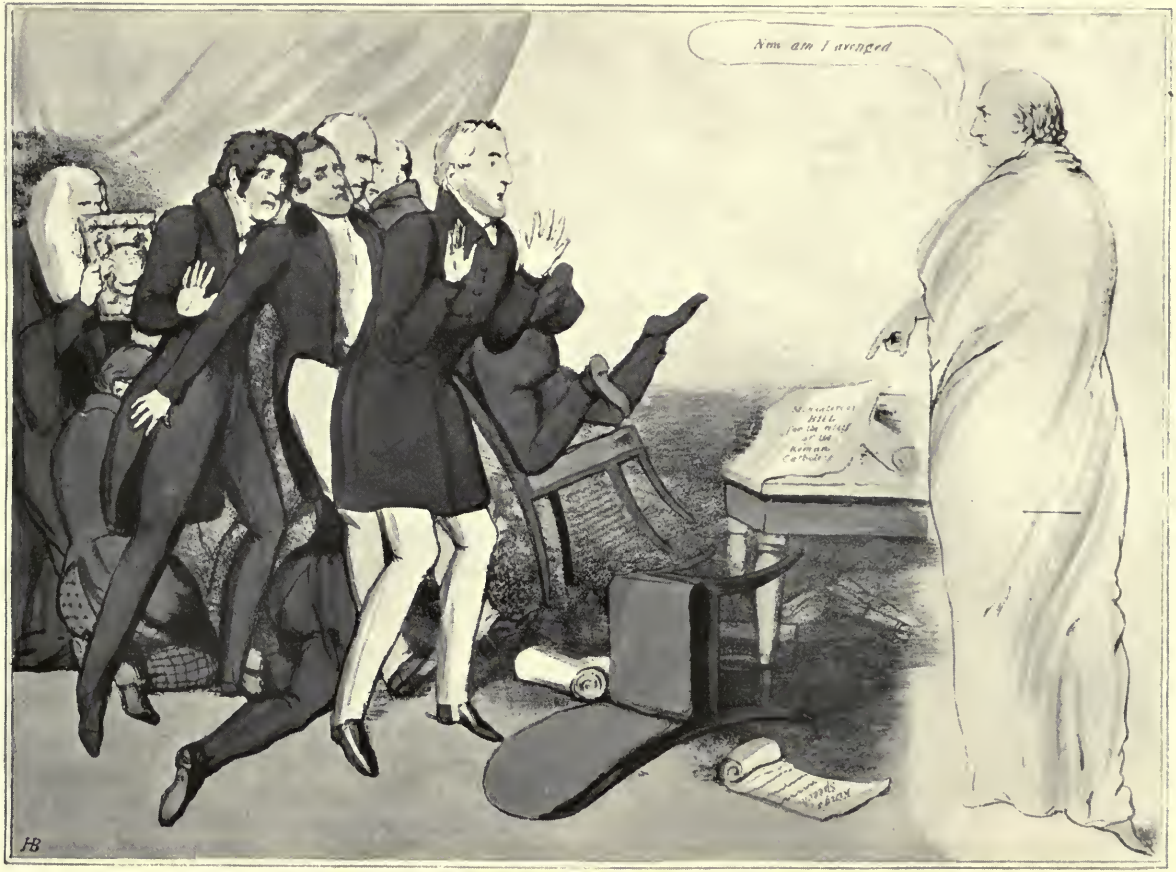
The Tories profited by the distractions of their opponents, who were divided, as has already been hinted, as to the right policy to be pursued. The 'Malignants' like Lord Grey, who refused all co-operation, were indignant with Lord Lansdowne for accepting office under the Duke, with Lord Holland for desiring office, and with Brougham for denying the desire and intriguing for its fulfilment: 'Wicked-shifts', 'Beelzebub', 'Achitophel', and 'the Archfiend' are some of the titles given by his political associates to the last-named in their familiar correspondence. These amenities were of bad omen for the future coherence of the Whig party.

The new Cabinet was framed on the old lines of the Liverpool days, with Huskisson, Dudley, Palmerston, and Lamb representing its Liberal wing; but the effects of their greater power under Canning were soon to be seen, and Wellington had none of Liverpool's talent for holding discordant elements together. The new Ministers went

on till March, 1828, differing upon almost every point that came under discussion, when a motion of Lord John Russell on Reform started the train of events which led to Catholic Emancipation and the fall of the Ministry. The two boroughs of Penryn and East Retford had been guilty of bribery and were to be disfranchised; Lord John, as always, was anxious that the members should be transferred to large unrepresented towns, in this case Manchester and Birmingham; the Tory policy was to throw the peccant boroughs into the adjacent hundreds, but several of the Cabinet preferred the former plan. A compromise was arranged, but was upset by a foolish vote in the Lords, and Huskisson and others felt free to vote as their instincts directed them. Peel defeated them in the House but was obviously annoyed, and Huskisson, who was clearer-headed in finance than in less impersonal transactions, felt bound to offer his resignation. He probably did not expect that it would be accepted, but the Duke, who was tired of dissensions and did not much care for Huskisson, took him at his word, and he departed, followed by Dudley, Palmerston, and Lamb: the Duke was at the head of a purely Tory administration, committed beyond anything else to the defiance of Catholic Emancipation.

But fate plays strange tricks: Huskisson's office (the Board of Trade) was offered to Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald; Mr. Vesey Fitzgerald, the member for Clare, had to seek re-election; and it was the Clare election, resulting in the triumphant return of O'Connell, which convinced the Duke that Emancipation must be conceded.

His military experience had taught him to lose no time in acting on a conviction of fact and negotiating a change of front; if the thing had to be done he had better do it, and early in 1829 the prospect was announced. Peel—


Now am I avenged
HB

'Orange Peel'—whom the King had once bidden to remember that he wrote as 'his Protestant minister' and was 'on this question the King's animus'—felt that he could not honourably follow his leader and proposed to resign. He was at length prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation and take charge of the measure, his main reason for yielding being no doubt the well-grounded conviction that no one could do it so well. His action cost him his seat for the University of Oxford: the 'home of lost causes' chooses, as Mr. Gladstone was to find, to be its own judge as to the moment when those causes are irretrievably lost. The Duke's personal difficulties were limited to a rather absurd duel with Lord Winchelsea, which he rightly believed would impress the public with a sense of the rectitude of his intentions. Politically he had to reckon with the King and the House of Lords; the former, urged by the Duke of Cumberland, made a strong resistance, but Wellington knew that he had no one else to whom he could turn, and after a brief crisis extorted a reluctant consent.

The House of Lords presented a more serious problem. Lord Eldon did not hesitate to declare in his place in Parliament that 'if ever a Roman Catholic is permitted to form part of the legislature of this country, from that moment the sun of Great Britain is set for ever'—a declaration which acquired some credit by the incessant rain of the following summer. He even went so far as to present, with some natural diffidence, a petition against the Bill signed by a great many ladies, which gave a noble lord the earliest opportunity of raising the now time-honoured laugh by inquiring as to their age.

The Duke was, however, not the man to be afraid of the one political body in England which he completely understood. Thirteen years before he had said to Creevey,

'Nobody cares a damn for the House of Lords; the House of Commons is everything in England and the House of Lords nothing'—an utterance which would seem to show that even in early days he had realized the limits of its power. The House as a whole justified the opinion of an observer who had predicted 'He'll say, "My Lords! Attention! Right about face! Quick march!" and the thing will be done'. The most completely Tory Government of the century had passed the cherished measure of the Whigs.

But there had been in this none of the adroitness of the party politician; the clothes of the Whigs had been stolen, but they fitted their new wearers very ill and, what was even more important, their previous owners had another suit to wear. Reform was now their leading object, and the distress in the country for the last two years had encouraged the desire to try any possible remedy. The Tory party, though it had obeyed orders, had bitterly resented the necessity, and the King's death was destined to overthrow a Ministry which he had failed to overthrow in life. He died in June, and the Opposition gained at the elections, partly through the news of the success of the July Revolution in Paris.

When the Duke met Parliament he went out of his way to challenge his Liberal opponents by declaring that for all practical purposes the British system of election was perfect, but this tardy sacrifice on the altar of Tory orthodoxy did not propitiate his dissatisfied followers, and the Government was beaten on the Civil List in November.

So ended that 'odious, insulting, aide-de-campish, incapable dictatorship', which had done the country much more good than harm, whatever may have been its effect on the destinies of the Tory party. It had

I should be sorry to see you defeated by such an unholy alliance, after all the battles we have fought and won together; but the fact is, I feel so oppressed with the Glory of so many victories that I must beg to be excused from interfering any more for the present in the disputes of others.—There are however plenty of clever fellows to be had, who are able & willing enough to assist you, but when you again meet with such, let me advise you not to be too ready to quarrell with them!
My good old friend I want your assistance against these fellows who are about to unite for the purpose of overpowering me by numbers.
Whatever you say John I will agree to: for Willy will is my pleasure.

probably served to convince the Duke that in politics he was a better servant than leader; the tactics of party management were hid from his eyes, and he did not realize how often a leader must only go where he is pushed by his followers. His conceptions of leadership were of a simpler type. 'The party!' he exclaimed to Lady Salisbury, 'the party! What is the meaning of a party if they don't follow their leaders? Damn 'em, let 'em go!'

Their loyalty had already been severely tried by the repeal of those Test and Corporation Statutes, which had excluded Dissenters from holding public office: an act, which in the Whigs would have been acclaimed as statesmanship, is in the Tories branded as concession. The results to the country were equally beneficial, but the party had not relished the necessity, and after this second and more dramatic compulsion they were indeed ready to 'go'.

XII
IRELAND

THE CHIEF EVENTS AFFECTING IRELAND BETWEEN THE FORMATION OF LIVERPOOL'S MINISTRY AND THE GRANTING OF CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION.

1812. *Canning carries a proposal to consider the question*

1813. *Grattan carries a motion in committee and introduces a Bill, with many safeguards. The Speaker defeats it by an amendment.*

1815. *A similar motion is rejected by a large majority.*

1819. *A similar motion made by Grattan is beaten by two votes: his last attempt.*

1821. *Plunket carries a motion for a committee of inquiry and introduces a Bill with strong safeguards: it passes the Commons, but is rejected by the Lords by 39.*

1822. *Canning's Bill, giving seats in Parliament to Roman Catholic peers, passes the Commons, but is rejected by the Lords.*

1823. *Lord Nugent's Bill, giving English Roman Catholics the vote, passes the Commons, but is rejected by the Lords.*

The Catholic Association is founded.

1824. *A committee is appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland.*

Lord Lansdowne revives Nugent's Bill, but it is rejected in the Lords.

1825. *The Associations Bill.*

Sir F. Burdett revives the question and brings in a Bill: it passes the Commons by 21, but is rejected by the Lords by 48.

1826. *The Waterford election results in the defeat of Beresford.*

1827. *Sir F. Burdett renews his motion, which is defeated by 4.*

1828. *Sir F. Burdett's motion is carried by 6, but is rejected by the Lords.*

The Clare election.

1829 *Peel introduces a Bill giving Emancipation but raising the voter's qualification from £2 to £10.*

XII

It is necessary at this point to endeavour to give some connected account of Irish affairs since 1815, and of the stages in the long struggle which had now reached its end. Opinion on Irish political questions has never coincided with party divisions in England: that is one of the reasons why their effect on English political life has been so uniformly disastrous. Mr. Gladstone attempted to make Home Rule a definite article in the party programme, but facts were against him, and, whatever may be thought of the heroism of his attempt, it has done no service to English life, and it may even be doubted whether it has in fact benefited the cause of Ireland.

In 1815, as has been already said, the Cabinet was avowedly divided on the subject of Catholic Emancipation. The history of the controversy is simple and unedifying. The support of the Roman Catholics to the measure of Union had been obtained by Pitt's promise of a complete measure of relief from the disabilities under which they suffered: the King had refused to allow this to be granted, and Pitt had accordingly resigned in 1801. He believed, and perhaps with reason, that to persist would drive George III finally out of his mind, and this belief was so generally shared that there was a tacit understanding that the question should not be raised again during his lifetime. The Ministry of All the Talents was held to have violated it, and the result had been a strong anti-Popery campaign in 1807 which drove them from office. The complete collapse of the King's reason in 1810 had removed the main obstacle to the

discussion of the question, and after that date few years passed without a debate on one or other of its aspects in the House of Commons. In these debates prominent members of the Government led the opposing factions. The Cabinet had avowedly been formed by a compromise on the subject, and the main arguments on either side had obviously little to do with the stereotyped party divisions; on the one side Castlereagh and Canning pleaded the necessity for honouring a promise which had been made, while on the other Peel and Eldon appealed, whether directly or indirectly, to the national distrust of Rome.

The Roman Catholics of Ireland had many privileges which were denied to their co-religionists in England: they could hold commissions in the Army and Navy and rise to any rank below that of General, and could sit as Justices of the Peace: they could vote at elections, and that on a lower franchise (40*s*.) than was allowed even to Protestants in England. But it was undeniable that Pitt had promised them full emancipation, with the implied right to sit in Parliament, and had only been prevented from giving it by the opposition of his Royal master: and Castlereagh, who had helped to drive the bargain, had no doubt that the price must be paid.

The attempt was at first made to suggest 'securities' which would propitiate the champions of Protestant ascendancy. The Irish bishops in 1799 had agreed that 'such interference of the Government as may enable it to be satisfied of the loyalty of the persons appointed to Bishoprics is just and ought to be agreed to'. But such an attitude was far from characteristic of Roman policy, and it was not long maintained: by 1808 it had been abandoned, and O'Connell, who was rising to the lead of the extremist party, was denouncing it as 'a decline of

slavery', a 'base and vile traffic', and a 'peddling and huxtering speculation'.

Daniel O'Connell was born in 1775, and till his death in 1847 was to prove a dominating figure in Irish life: in his last years his influence declined, and 1829 represents no doubt the zenith of his fame, but throughout our period his character was to impress itself for good and evil on the relations of the two countries. He was undoubtedly a great man, and a great and true lover both of his country and of his Church: it is less high praise to say that he was a great orator, a great agitator, and a great man of business, but it was through his combination of these qualities that he won the battle of Catholic Emancipation. On the other hand, he had defects destined to prove disastrous to both countries, which may be summed up in the statement that he was a Celt of the Celts, and that there could hardly have been a man less fitted to commend Irish ideas to the English middle-class. The habitual intemperance of his language was as uncongenial to them as the almost ecclesiastic suavity which he could at some times assume: his peculiar want of sensitiveness in pecuniary transactions offended one class of Englishman as much as his refusal to fight duels offended another.[1] But of his political genius there can be no question: he saw the opportunity which the low Irish franchise gave, and used it to the full. At present

[1] He had killed his man in a duel in 1815 and refused to fight again, but he did not abstain from the most violent abuse of his enemies. Peel, Hardinge, Lord Alvanley, and Disraeli were among those who challenged him. In the first case he agreed to fight, but was thought to have connived at his own arrest to prevent it. When he was arguing before Lord Norbury he once said, 'I fear, my Lord, I do not make myself understood'. 'Oh, Mr. O'Connell,' said his Lordship, 'I am sure no one is more easily *apprehended*.'

the multitudes of Roman Catholic peasants who had the franchise exercised it in a docile manner at the bidding of their Protestant landlords, who compounded in their tenants' eyes for their heretical faith by those vices of profusion, irresponsibility, and violence which have never failed to excite some sympathy in Ireland. O'Connell was to change all that and to hand over power in Ireland to the tenants, and through them to the priests: if he settled the first great Irish problem of the century he was to raise the second. But all this was as yet in the womb of the future, and O'Connell's leadership had still to be asserted.

Grattan had produced a Bill containing 'securities' in 1813; but the agitation against him in Ireland robbed it of any real chance of success, and the impracticable position taken up by O'Connell and the priests was an additional difficulty to the friends of Emancipation in England. Resolution after resolution was introduced in the House of Commons: in 1823 a Bill giving large concessions but containing a veto on the appointment of bishops was passed in that House, but was rejected in the Lords by a majority of thirty-nine—acclaimed by Protestants as 'the thirty-nine who saved the thirty-nine Articles', but it was becoming clear that no such qualified offer would be accepted.

The Government became progressively more conciliatory, and the Irish administration of which Peel had been the moving spirit from 1812 to 1818 was succeeded in 1821 by the Vice-Royalty of Lord Wellesley, an avowed 'Catholic'. This splendid personage has been treated by posterity with some of that neglect of which he so bitterly complained in his lifetime. He is no doubt the greatest man who was ever passionately desirous to be made a Duke, and few men have earned the distinction better.

His magnificent achievements in India fall outside our period, but even if we treat them with the habitual disregard of our nation for the deeds of its great proconsuls he has a claim which no one else can bring. 'The public owe Arthur to me', he used to say of his younger brother; 'I first discovered his genius for war, and I employed him on my responsibility when he was unknown and would have remained unknown.' Lord Wellesley would have been very unwilling to rest his claims on the discovery of one whom in later moments of irritation he described as 'the biggest fool who ever lived'. The relations between the two brothers afford a very interesting study; it may be doubted if any family can produce so noble a pair, and it is pleasant to think that they were reconciled in 1838 after long estrangement. Their portraits face one another in the Provost's drawing-room at Eton: Lord Wellesley was the finer subject and has inspired the nobler picture, and local patriotism will not grudge him this triumph in the school which he so passionately loved: he never failed in loyalty to 'dear Eton' after the tempestuous episode which closed his brief career at Harrow. But he lacked that self-command in which his younger brother was so conspicuously great, and history, which honours them both, has been guided by no accident to its verdict in favour of the younger brother. The new Viceroy had still further distinctions of a more normal order: he had been Foreign Secretary in 1809 and invited to form a Ministry three years later: it is more to the present purpose that he had long been a warm supporter of Emancipation, and had predicted the speedy triumph of the cause as early as 1812. He was to hold office in Ireland from 1821 to 1828, and to prove himself one of the best of Viceroys, in spite of the bitter verdict of Mr. Croker, who characteristically pronounced him

'the most brilliant incapacity in England'. But the task was beyond him. He gave enough proof of his sympathies to make himself very unpopular with the Protestants of Dublin, who drank on one occasion, 'Success to the export trade of Ireland, and may Lord Wellesley be the first article exported'. He even married a Roman Catholic wife, to the no small annoyance of his brother the Duke, who regarded it as 'a scandalous exhibition'. But this did not avail to conciliate the extremists, who were now, under the guidance of O'Connell, forming the Catholic Association, the most ingenious and most successful of Irish movements to defy the law. The Association collected a 'Catholic Rent' by voluntary contributions, and were within a year (1823) receiving £700 a week; it became a danger to the public peace, and the Government introduced an Associations Bill to suppress it, thus aiming their weapon at Orange Associations also. Then, as now, they found it impossible to induce their opponents to believe in their impartiality. Brougham denounced the letter 's' added to the word Association as a piece of obvious hypocrisy: it was in this year that he charged Canning with holding office by 'a most monstrous piece of political tergiversation'. Canning gave him the lie, and the tradition of the Reporters' Gallery preserved for the young Dickens the story of their reconciliation, kindling thus the inspiration which enabled him later to describe the immortal quarrel between Mr. Pickwick and Mr. Blotton of Aldgate.

Burdett introduced another Bill to give Emancipation, and the House, conscious that repression by itself was useless, passed it by a small majority, though the Government added two 'Wings' to provide 'securities'. The Lords rallied once more to the call of the Duke of York and rejected it by 48: the toast at the Protestant

banquet was ' the 48, 1688, and the glorious memory of William the Third '.

The Act for suppressing Associations proved as useless as such acts usually are: it was badly drafted, and O'Connell continued to encourage contributions to his Association ' for all purposes allowable by law '. He now turned his attention to a new plan of campaign, and in 1826 secured the defeat of a Beresford in County Waterford: ' the forty shilling freeholders ' were induced to vote against their landlords, and a new and menacing danger threatened Protestant ascendancy. It was clear that what could be done in Waterford could be repeated elsewhere, and the next opportunity was not long in coming. During Canning's brief administration the Catholic Association refused to moderate its tone and to put its confidence in him: it had now learnt that it might soon be able to dictate.

And so the event proved: as has been said, Huskisson's retirement caused a vacancy in Clare: O'Connell offered himself as a candidate and swept the constituency. ' All the gentry and all the £50 freeholders ' were for Fitzgerald, and ' the gentry to a man ', but the priests were irresistible. ' Every altar became a tribune,' and O'Connell's return was a triumph of order and discipline.

As has been shown, the Duke was quick to appreciate its meaning: he was not the man to face civil war, and both he and Peel were doubtful of the ultimate loyalty of the troops in Ireland. There seemed a danger, in Canning's phrase, that ' the extinguishers might take fire '.[1]

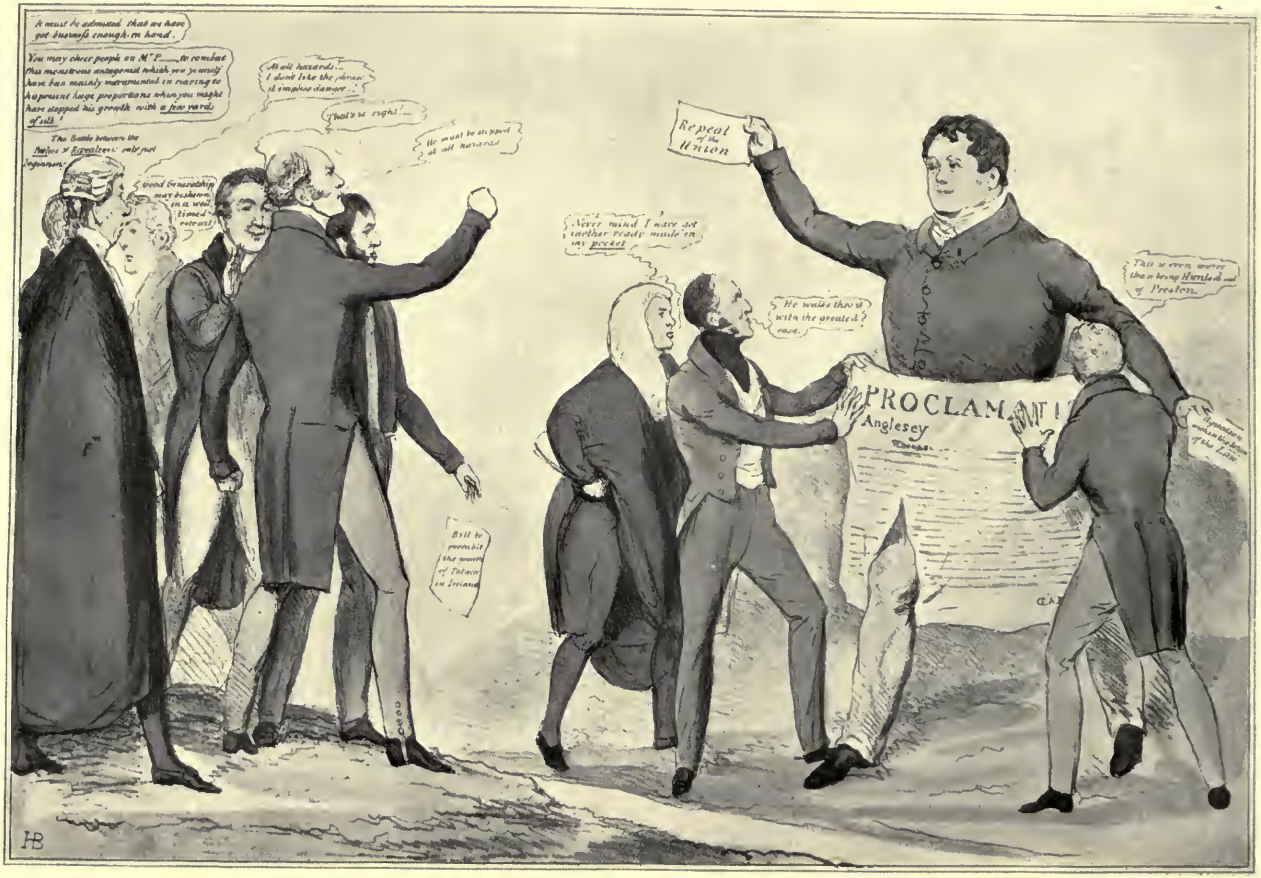
[1] Earlier in his Ministry the Duke had drawn attention in the Lords to the personal difficulties under which he laboured. ' I feel particular concern at being under the necessity of following my noble relative, and of stating that I differ in opinion from him whom I so dearly love, and for whose opinions I entertain so

The attempt to impose ' securities ' was abandoned by general consent: Tories like Lord Lyndhurst might doubt whether Roman policy was not likely to remain anti-national: Whigs like Lord Grenville might warn those who congratulated them that ' as the priests were not to be paid, more harm than good would be done by giving them mouthpieces in Parliament ', but for the moment there was general rejoicing that the question had been settled, and the debt of 1800 paid at last. Peel introduced a Bill abolishing the forty-shilling franchise, and it was hoped that with a more stable electorate the sun would at last rise on a prosperous and contented Ireland whose grievances had been removed.

We know now how far these bright hopes were from fulfilment. Mr. Dooley may not be justified in saying that ' When England perishes Ireland will die of *ennui*, which means having no one in this weary world you don't love ', but in any case there was no lack of new grievances to replace the old.

The Tories, in deference to the King, made the grotesque and ungenerous blunder of not allowing O'Connell to take his seat without re-election: they may have hoped that the new electors would reverse the old verdict: if so, they were doomed to disappointment. O'Connell came back unopposed, and the petty spite recoiled on its authors. The Whigs when they came into office the next year were as ungenerous, and with less excuse; the Irish members had helped by their votes to turn out the Duke, and gratitude as well as prudence should have counselled them to give O'Connell legal office in Ireland. They missed their chance, and the ' Liberator ', declaring

much respect and deference.' He remarked on one occasion that ' amidst all the distinctions of his life he had never forgotten the honour of being Lord Wellesley's brother '.


It must be admitted that we have got business enough in hand.
You may cheer people on Mr P___ to combat this monstrous antagonist which you yourself have been mainly instrumental in rearing to his present huge proportions when you might have stopped his growth with a few yards of silk!
The Battle between the Parties of Rivalleers: only just beginning
Good Generalship may be shewn in a well-timed retreat
At all hazards!.. I don't like the phrase it implies danger..!
That's it right!..
He must be stopped at all hazards
Bill to prohibit the growth of Tobacco in Ireland
Never mind I have got another ready made in my pocket
He walks thro' it with the greatest ease.
Repeal of the Union
This is even worse than being Hunted out of Preston.
PROCLAMATI
Anglesey
HB

there was still to be no justice for Catholics, hastened back to Ireland to make the Government of the new Viceroy impossible. Lord Anglesey had been a popular Viceroy before and was in warm sympathy with the Catholics, but he now found himself engaged in a struggle in which Irish wits were, not for the last time, to contend successfully with the forces of law and order. O'Connell had now declared that nothing but Repeal would help Ireland: Anglesey replied by proclaiming his meetings. As fast as one Association was declared illegal another sprang phoenixlike from its ashes. The catalogue begins, audaciously enough, with—'a General Association for the Prevention of Unlawful Meetings': it passed through the phases of 'A Body of Persons in the habit of meeting weekly', 'A Society for legal and legislative relief', until after several other incarnations it ended as a breakfast party at Hayes' Hotel. The Viceroy was forced in the end to forbid any association under any name, and then at last O'Connell was driven into a breach of the law; but the triumph of his opponents was short-lived: his votes were needed for the Reform Bill, on which he made a brilliant speech, and the prosecution was dropped. But the harm had been done, and the fatality which presides over English dealings with Ireland had reasserted itself within two years of Emancipation.

The Protestant Establishment in Ireland and the collection of its tithes were to prove the first of a series of problems with which the disappointed Whigs were compelled to deal. The sins of the fathers are not limited in their effect to the third and fourth generation, and such virtues as the English nation possesses are precisely those which the Irish are least ready to appreciate.

The sentences with which O'Connell ended his speech against Coercion in 1833 sound the knell of the fair hopes

with which the Reformed Parliament had been welcomed. 'There was a time when a ray of hope dawned upon Ireland. It was when the present Parliament first assembled. We saw this reformed House of Commons congregated. We knew that every man here had a constituency; we knew that the people of England were represented here: we knew that the public voice not only would influence your decisions but command your votes: we hoped that you would afford us a redress of our grievances—and you give us an act of despotism.'

There had now come into existence under O'Connell's leadership a third party destined to hold the balance in many Parliaments and to overthrow many Ministries. The two great parties in England were beginning to marshal themselves for battle; but party warfare, to be happily waged, demands a close attention to the rules, one of which is that there must not be more than two parties or two great issues at any given moment. Ireland was to provide from the first that third group which is by its very existence a standing denial of the ideal dichotomy on which the party system rests, and a practical temptation to every party leader.

Ireland had not so far become a party question: it was in an evil hour for the happiness of both countries that it first became one. To be the successful leader of an English party is an almost complete disqualification for understanding the Irish, and the few Englishmen who ever succeeded in the attempt have been those who have been most free from the presuppositions which are dear to the average Whig or Tory mind. The Whigs brought higher hopes to the task, and their disappointment has been proportionately great: they had suffered for the cause of religious liberty, and had hoped for some gratitude when the battle was won, but it is a leading

Radical who at the end of our period exclaims indignantly, 'What wonder Ireland produces no venomous reptiles, seeing that her erect walking serpents absorb all her venom!' The Tories expected less: 'strong government', however desirable, is not a gift which wins immediate gratitude; but Conservatives at any rate coerce with a comparatively clear conscience, whereas Liberals who are driven to the course resent the necessity, and are indignant at those whose innate perversity places them in a false position. The simple fact is that no English party has ever understood the Irish: it is a poor consolation to reflect that no Irish party has ever understood the English.[1]

[1] Throughout this section I have been much indebted to the able study of O'Connell by J. A. Hamilton.

XIII

THE WHIG MINISTRY OF 1830

LORD GREY'S CABINET

First Lord of the Treasury	*Earl Grey.*
Lord Chancellor	*Henry Brougham, created Lord Brougham and Vaux.*
Lord President of the Council	*Marquess of Lansdowne.*
Privy Seal	*Earl of Durham.*
Home Secretary	*Viscount Melbourne.*
Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of House of Commons	*Lord Althorp.*
Foreign Secretary	*Lord Palmerston.*
Colonial Secretary	*Viscount Goderich, afterwards Earl of Ripon.*[1]
First Lord of the Admiralty	*Sir James Graham, Bart.*[1]
President, Board of Control (India)	*Charles Grant.*
Postmaster-General	*Duke of Richmond.*[1]
Chancellor, Duchy of Lancaster	*Lord Holland.*
No Office	*Earl of Carlisle.*

OTHER MINISTERS NOT IN THE CABINET

Secretary at War	*Charles Wynn.*[2]
Paymaster of the Forces	*Lord John Russell, entered Cabinet 1831.*
Lord Steward	*Marquess Wellesley.*
Lord Lieutenant of Ireland	*Marquess of Anglesey.*
Chief Secretary for Ireland	*Edward Stanley.*[3]

[1] Resigned in May 1834.
[2] Resigned in March 1831 as a protest against the Reform Bill.
[3] Entered the Cabinet June 1831, and resigned in May 1834.

XIII

But these sorrows of the future were hidden from the eyes of the Whigs when in November 1830 they returned to office from which they had so long been banished by their virtues and their faults; they might not unfairly hope that the Irish question had been laid to rest for a generation.

They returned under the best auspices, for the Tories were distracted as well as defeated, and they had at last a King who was genuinely sympathetic with their most important project. King William had made a not inauspicious beginning of his reign; his talent for verbose and pointless speech-making had not as yet developed, and these criticisms did not apply to the chief public utterance with which he was at present credited—the cry, 'Generals, generals, keep step, keep step! Admirals, keep step!', uttered at the funeral of his predecessor. As his Majesty himself was not a good walker ('I know of no phrase', says one of his loyal subjects, 'which could more strikingly characterize his mode of walking than to say "he waddles"') his interest in the dignity of the proceedings was all the more disinterested.

The death of Huskisson at the opening of the Manchester and Liverpool Railway had paved the way for the absorption of the Canningites in the Liberal party; it was perhaps not without significance that his fatal accident occurred at the moment when he was seeking reconciliation with the Duke, but without Canning or Huskisson the party could not hope to continue its independent existence.

The way was now open at last for Lord Grey to lead

his party to the victory for which he had waited so long. There are few prominent figures in English political life whose record is so honourable or so consistent. It was in April 1792 that he had founded the Society of Friends of the People, whose two objects were declared to be ' to restore the freedom of election and a more equal representation of the People in Parliament, and to secure to the People a more frequent exercise of their right of electing their representatives ' ; it was in the same month that he gave notice of a motion for the Reform of Parliament, which he introduced in the following year, and to that cause he had been unswervingly true. His Society and his motion were overwhelmed in the general panic caused by events in France ; to ask for better representation was to proclaim yourself a Republican, and to demand more frequent elections was to identify yourself with the excesses of the people of Paris. But the Society was an invaluable link between the Whig party and the Reformers, and its respectable existence did something, though not much, to protect its humbler brother, the London Corresponding Society (founded by Thomas Hardy the shoemaker), from the prosecution which fell heavily in those days on all who dared to advocate Reform. Few men were by instinct less qualified than Grey to sympathize with the Radical demands of working men : in the beautiful picture of him by Romney which hangs in the Provost's Lodge at Eton it is impossible to mistake the aristocratic contempt for anything vulgar.

He was distrusted undeservedly by the Radicals as lukewarm in the cause almost to the end, and even in 1832 it was necessary for precautions to be taken that he might not have too close a view of an ' ill-looking fellow ' among a deputation of working men who waited on him to assure him of support. But, in fact, he had

I'm off!
Your Conditions?
Retrenchment, Reform and Peace!
Done!!
Right about face. – March!!!
HB

for years entertained a scheme of Reform far more Radical than his humbler allies dared to hope, or than many of his Whig followers were prepared to welcome. The Friends of the People had drawn up in 1792 a Report on the rotten boroughs, and from that date Grey had determined on their complete extinction ; by 1820 he had devised in his own mind a scheme not very unlike that which his Ministry was ultimately to carry.

His character is a strange mixture of courage and timidity ; his record in foreign policy, though excellent when he was in office, is marred by that despondency which other great Whig leaders have felt in times of war, and one of the earliest resolutions that he ever moved ' that it is at all times in the interest of this country to preserve peace ' is not altogether saved from danger by its absurdity.

In personal life he was the soul of honour, though this had not prevented him from publicly asserting in the House of Commons a fact which he knew to be false when loyalty to his party, and in particular to Mr. Fox, made it desirable to do so.[1]

He was now sixty-six, and was to achieve a glory seldom won by a politician who has had so long to wait for power, though Palmerston and Disraeli were still older when that power came to them.

Lord Grey formed what has been justly described as the most aristocratic Cabinet of the century. Lord

[1] In 1789 Grey denied the rumour that the Prince Regent was married to Mrs. Fitzherbert and that Fox had wilfully concealed it ; both statesmen knew by that time that the story was true, though Fox may have believed it when he made the statement. If Disraeli had had more moral courage and known more history he might have repaired his famous blunder, or at any rate provided himself with a distinguished precedent for deceiving the House of Commons.

Lansdowne, Lord Holland, and himself gave quality to the Ministry in the House of Lords, but there were other appointments which caused him more trouble. Lord Althorp was with great difficulty induced to accept the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his high character and popularity with his brother members were to prove of the greatest value to the Government. He was still only forty-eight, though he had been in Parliament for six and twenty years, and had throughout that period preserved the title of 'honest Jack Althorp'. A member of the House writes about this period: 'There is something to me quite delightful in his calm, clumsy, courageous, inimitable probity, and well meaning', and no one thought the worse of him because they knew that, in his own phrase, he really went down to the House of Commons as if he was going to execution. His complete indifference to office was, as always, a great source of strength with that very human assembly, which loves to shower its favours on those who despise them. He had only recently overcome his diffidence sufficiently to accept the leadership of his party in the Commons, but every day had strengthened his hold upon them.

Palmerston was, with some misgivings, put at the Foreign Office, but the question which really came between Lord Grey and his rest was what was to be done with Brougham, who had just secured election for Yorkshire—an event which, though partly due to respect for Wilberforce and his work for the slaves, was not unjustly described by that brilliant but unstable personage as his 'greatest achievement', though it may not have been, as he also claimed, 'the highest compliment ever paid to a public man'. Grey was bound to him by long ties of intimacy, and, these considerations apart, he felt that the member for Yorkshire in the Commons might

be too much for the disciplinary powers of Lord Althorp. He was offered the Great Seal, which after some consideration he accepted, and went to the Lords, as Lord Brougham and Vaux—*Vaux et praeterea nihil*, as his enemies, and some of his own party, charitably hoped. Lord John Russell, who might have been thought to have a right to higher office, was made Paymaster of the Forces—an office hallowed by the memory of the first Lord Holland, and rendered attractive by the absence of any serious work, a house in Whitehall, and a salary of £2,000 a year.

Lamb, who had succeeded his father as Viscount Melbourne two years before, went to the Home Office, and there were two other members of the new Ministry who were also destined to win high honour, though under another flag. Of these Sir James Graham owes his place in history to his friendship with Peel, between whose principles and those of the most moderate Whigs the gap was small. Stanley's presence in the Ministry will cause more surprise to those who think of him as the great Earl of Derby, so long the brilliant, if erratic, leader of the Conservatives. He had served in Canning's Ministry, and had not yet forgiven Wellington and Peel for their refusal to co-operate with that great man. His disgust with them, rather than any enthusiasm for the cause of Reform, had thrown him into the arms of Lord Grey, who thought that Ireland would prove a fit field for the gratification of those fighting instincts which were, in early days at least, his great political asset. The judgement was not wrong, and so long as Stanley remained in the Government he did it yeoman service; in fact he probably worked harder for the Whig Government than he ever did for any party of his own. But he was not at home with the Whigs, he hated the Radicals, and he

was consistently loyal to the Church, so that his famous whisper in 1834 ' Johnny has upset the coach ' expressed neither surprise nor regret.[1]

But at the moment when the omens seemed fairest the sky was overcast, and the first serious business which the new Ministry had to undertake was to deal with the agricultural revolt which had broken out in August. It is impossible not to feel sympathy with Lord Grey and his colleagues in having at once to suppress an agitation arising among those classes of which they had made themselves the special champions, but historians of the opposite party would be more than human if they failed to point out the glaring contrast between their attitude in office and their protestations in opposition. The revolt was suppressed with a severity which exceeds that for which Castlereagh and Sidmouth had been so bitterly blamed, and it is idle to fasten all the blame on the Home Secretary, Lord Melbourne. Castlereagh has never been allowed the advantage of that plea, and it is difficult to see why he should bear a responsibility which no one dreams of fastening on the humane Lord Althorp.[2] Grey

[1] Lord John Russell in that year agreed, on behalf of the Government, to the secularization of the revenues of the Irish Church: Stanley, who had by that time become Colonial Secretary, resigned his office in May 1834, and was accompanied in his retirement by Graham, the Duke of Richmond, and Lord Ripon. See p. 186. It is worth remembering to the credit of a statesman who was not always consistent that Lord Derby's last speech in 1869 was in defence of the Irish Church.

[2] Lord Melbourne's official biographer confines himself to the remark that ' unexpected diligence, promptitude, and vigour were from the first shown by Melbourne in dealing with a state of turbulence and crime in England long unexampled '; while Walpole with equal complacency observes that ' the proceedings of the Special Commission relieved the Southern Counties from a reign of terror which had no parallel in recent English history ' (ii. 627). The language seems exaggerated when it is remembered

was no doubt already occupied in his projects of Reform, but he cannot escape his share of the responsibility, and Lord Holland, who had been foremost in denouncing Tory persecutions, made as little protest now as did Lord Lansdowne, who sat beside the judges on the Salisbury bench.

It is necessary to explain in a few words the grievances from which the agricultural labourer was suffering. The Enclosure Acts, which had been justified by the need of producing more corn, had hit him very hard. Nearly five million acres had been taken from common field and waste land between 1760 and 1810, and the process had by no means stopped. Some enclosures had been undoubtedly wise, some as undoubtedly wicked, but in neither case had the villager received any compensation or any adequate opportunity of stating his case. Arthur Young did not hesitate to declare that ' by nineteen out of twenty Inclosure Bills the poor are injured and some grossly injured '. The old law of settlement operated to prevent his moving, a privilege which was rapidly becoming more necessary. He had lost his rights on the common land, and was now a labourer with no minimum wage, no allotments, and a Poor Law which, if not unkind, was in the highest degree demoralizing. So long as prices kept up, his condition was disguised by the general prosperity of the time, but the war had brought a sudden fall, and by 1824 a Committee on Agricultural Wages reported that in the south of England wages varied from 9*s.* a week to 3*s.* for a single and 4*s.* 6*d.* for a married man. Buckinghamshire and Kent both produced instances of the last figure. The English labourer was the most

that only one life was lost in all the riots (and that the life of a rioter), and that no one on the side of law and order was killed or seriously wounded.

miserable peasant in Europe; he had done his part, as Mr. Hardy reminds us, in winning the war, but his condition was appreciably worse in all respects than it had been in 1795, though the whole standard of living in the country had risen in the same period. It was in 1800, and only seventeen miles from Charing Cross, that Lord Clarendon's mother writes that the 'labourers (who, of course, are very numerous on the farm) who have very high wages compared with other years, were so distress'd that many who have wives and large families live *literally* upon bread and water the whole week, being seldom able to afford cheese, and never having meat but on a Sunday, and that not always'.[1]

And now there came upon him the threatened introduction of machinery to rob him of his last chance of earning even this miserable pittance: it is not surprising that there was an epidemic of rick-burning in the south of England, accompanied by the destruction of threshing-machines. Such disorder could naturally not be tolerated, but the outbreaks in Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire were punished with a savagery which panic may explain but cannot excuse. At Winchester, though the rioters had taken no life and injured no person, 101 prisoners were capitally convicted; six were actually executed, and the rest, with few exceptions, transported for life; at Salisbury 154 were sentenced to transportation, 33 of them for life; at Reading 23 were transported for life and one hung.

The gloomy story came to a discreditable end with the prosecution of Cobbett for abetting the disorder; he was prosecuted by Denman (forgetful of his earlier efforts for the oppressed in the person of Queen Caroline), but called the Lord Chancellor to the witness-box to testify that he,

[1] *Life of Lord Clarendon* (Maxwell), i. 12.

in his capacity as President of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, had asked and obtained leave to publish one of the pamphlets now described as seditious. Cobbett was refused the opportunity which he demanded of cross-examining Grey, Melbourne, Palmerston, Durham, and Goderich, but enough had been done. The prosecution was overwhelmed with ridicule, and Cobbett was free; but while the Guildhall was ringing with the cheers at his acquittal, the good ships *Eliza*, *Proteus*, and *Eleanor* were carrying their cargo of 457 convicted labourers to their new home in the Antipodes.[1]

[1] In this section I have been much indebted to Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan's brilliant book, *Lord Grey of the Reform Bill*. The author is singularly fair-minded, and refrains as much as, or more than, can be expected from one bearing his distinguished names from insisting that 'the Whig dogs should have the best of it'. I venture to think that he exaggerates the essential Toryism of the Duke, and that Grey saw more in him with which to sympathize than his biographer can. He tends to put all the blame on Lord Melbourne for the savage suppression of the Agricultural revolt, though leaving Castlereagh to bear the discredit for the administration of the Home Office in earlier years. I do not think that in either case an individual can be regarded as responsible, though I agree that the Home Secretary, rather than the Foreign Secretary, even though he may be leader of the House, is primarily to blame.

XIV

THE REFORM BILL

A BRIEF STATEMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL PROVISIONS OF THE REFORM BILL

FIRST REFORM BILL.

60[1] *boroughs (with 119 members) of less than 2,000 inhabitants disfranchised.*

47[2] *boroughs (with 96 members) of less than 4,000 inhabitants partially disfranchised.*

5 additional members given to Scotland and Ireland and 1 to Wales.

55 additional members given to English counties.

44 additional members given to great unrepresented towns.

The numbers of Parliament reduced by about 50.

SECOND REFORM BILL.

57 boroughs disfranchised.

40 boroughs partially disfranchised.

THIRD REFORM BILL.

57 boroughs (with 111 members) wholly disfranchised.

30 boroughs partially disfranchised.

The numbers of Parliament remained unaltered (658) and more towns were thereby enfranchised.

[1] Reduced later to 54.

[2] Reduced later to 44.

XIV

THE Ministry was now at liberty to devote itself to developing its plans of Reform. It is important to remember that, much as the Tories were alarmed at the prospect before them, the Radicals were hardly better satisfied. Place describes the new Ministry as 'a motley assembly' of 'Whigs, Whig Reformers, half and half Tories, and others who cared little about anything beyond their emoluments, and knew little beyond what they learned in the drawing-rooms of their associates, the clubs to which they belonged, or the clique with which they congregated'. He 'placed no reliance on the vague declaration' of Lord Grey. On the other hand, the Ministry had an opportunity such as few parties have ever had. The system by which members were then elected to Parliament seems to a later generation so fantastic as to make criticism unnecessary, and it is needless to describe its absurdities in detail. Peacock was hardly exaggerating when he described 'Mr. Christopher Corporate, the free, fat, and dependent burgess of the ancient and honourable borough of One Vote who returns two members to Parliament'; and when we read that he did in fact return as one of his representatives Sir Oran Haut-ton, Baronet (the tame orang-outang who had acquired almost every civilized art except that of speech), the strain on our credulity is hardly excessive. The result was accomplished by 'persuasion in a tangible shape', and there is no reason to suppose that the constituency was dissatisfied either with the method or with its results. The same method was freely employed

in every similar borough throughout the kingdom, and if Sir Oran was never able to learn to speak he at any rate did not waste the time of the House. The Duke of Rottenburgh who owned the property no doubt consoled himself, if his conscience was tender, by remembering how many able and distinguished young men had owed their first chance of Parliamentary distinction to this system, but its action was too haphazard to be tolerated much longer, and the Duke had to reconcile himself to the new situation. The anti-Reformers found some consolation of a practical kind for the iniquities of the Bill in the reflection that after all there were nearly as many rotten boroughs voting Whig as Tory, and there were some few patriots who were ready to emulate the Wiltshire member who was later to rise in his place and say, 'I am the proprietor of Ludgershall, I am the member for Ludgershall, I am the constituency of Ludgershall, and in all these capacities I assent to the disfranchisement of Ludgershall.'

The Bill which Lord John Russell introduced on behalf of the Government on March 1 found little favour with the extremists on either side. The Tories had hoped for a measure which, while removing many anomalies, some of which it had become very difficult to defend, would yet leave the general character of Parliament unaltered: they found themselves faced with a Bill which definitely transferred political power to the middle classes. There was no describing the amazement which, according to Lord Eldon, it occasioned in their ranks. On the other hand the Radicals, whose ideal was universal suffrage, or at any rate such a suffrage as existed in Westminster and the few 'open' parishes of the metropolis, felt no enthusiasm for a middle-class domination. A writer from Manchester described the Bill in a letter

to the *Poor Man's Guardian* as 'the most illiberal, the most tyrannical, the most abominable, the most hellish measure that ever could or can be proposed', and advised his readers to prepare their coffins, 'for if this Bill passes you will be starved to death by thousands, and thrown on the dunghill or on to the ground naked like dogs.'

As might be presumed from such unanimous criticism from opposite parties the Bill was both wise and statesmanlike: it provided for the disfranchisement of all boroughs with less than 2,000 inhabitants and the semi-disfranchisement of all with less than 4,000: for the extension of the franchise to £10 householders in boroughs and £10 copyholders in counties: it gave members to the more populous towns and more members to the more populous counties, and yet made an appreciable reduction in the numbers of Parliament. The ballot, which had been recommended by the Committee charged with the preparation of the Bill, was struck out of the scheme in deference to the objections of Lord Grey.

The method adopted for dealing with the franchise was simple to a fault. Those who framed the Bill were not enamoured of a wide extension of the suffrage, sharing perhaps the opinion of the Duke of Buckingham, who, in speaking of the most famous of the 'open' constituencies, declared that 'it would be difficult to bestow an eleemosynary penny in the Strand without hazarding the appearance of bribing a Westminster elector'. They shunned the questionable benefit of an alliance with the Radicals, and established in every borough the £10 household franchise, raising the standard where it was at present lower. The Bill gave, and was intended to give, power to the middle classes, and to them alone.

The fortunes of the Bill have been often narrated, and full justice has been done both to its dramatic episodes

and to the courage with which Lord John Russell, assisted by Lord Althorp, conducted its progress. Lord John's first experience of political questions had begun with a visit to Spain at the age of sixteen, during which he wrote with some temerity to his father the Duke of Bedford, 'taking the liberty of informing him and his Opposition friends that the French had not conquered the whole of Spain.' He had had his ear pinched by Napoleon in Elba, and perhaps as a result of that compliment joined the Opposition in deprecating the renewal of war in 1815. He had had, for a Reformer, a curious introduction to political life, for he had been brought into Parliament for a nomination borough before he reached the legal age, an experience which he shared with Charles James Fox: he was now thirty-nine and had had a somewhat chequered Parliamentary career, in the course of which he had more than once meditated retirement, to devote himself to those literary pursuits to which personal inclinations and the best Whig traditions inclined him. Thomas Moore, his intimate friend, had remonstrated with him in some characteristic lines beginning:

What! thou with thy genius, thy youth, and thy name!
Thou born of a Russell, whose instinct to run
The accustomed career of thy sires is the same
As the eaglet's, to soar with his eyes on the sun.

Family tradition, helped by an indomitable spirit, triumphed over infirmities of body and the caprice of electors, and Lord Lyttelton, another poetical friend, was able to congratulate him in the same fashionable metre:

And see where in front of the battle again
A Russell, sweet liberty's champion, appears,
While myriads of freemen compose his bright train,
And the blessing still lives through the long lapse of years.

Take my advice and keep your old Lamp such as it is.— Any trifling, little repairs it may require, I shall be most happy to do for you, not that I have any wish to get the job:— I would not upon my honor, have such a thing suspected for all the world.
New Lamps for Old!
HB

Poetry has seldom found its inspiration in politics: Shelley and Byron might have produced poems more in accordance with Lord John's undeniable merits, but it is doubtful whether either of them would have found applause so stimulating as abuse.

In one respect he was admirably qualified for his task, for since 1819 hardly a year had passed in which he had not drawn the attention of the House to the urgent necessity of Reform. Already in that year he had urged the necessity of disfranchising corrupt boroughs in the interest of large towns. He had then declared that 'the principles of the construction of this House are pure and worthy', and had deprecated imitating the folly of the servant in the story of Aladdin who was deceived by the cry 'New lamps for old'. His opponents in 1831 naturally taunted him now with his desire 'for a burnished and tinselled article of modern manufacture', but he was entitled to the retort that a great deal of water had flowed under the bridges in the last twelve years.

The Bill passed its second reading in the Commons by a majority of one, and the scene of enthusiasm was not surprising; but it was beaten in Committee a few days later.[1] The King had at first been unwilling to sanction a dissolution: in fact, the only poetry he ever composed is said to have been the couplet:

I consider Dissolution
Tantamount to Revolution;

but his fighting instincts were now roused, and he came

[1] Creevey records seeing Grey a day or two after the great division 'the best dressed, and handsomest, and apparently the happiest man in all his royal master's dominions'. That royal master had, as Creevey records on the same page, dismissed two officers of his household at Grey's request for voting against the Bill; Lord North himself could not have been more prompt.—*Creevey Papers*, ii. 225.

to dissolve Parliament in person, arriving dramatically in the middle of an angry scuffle in the House of Lords. The Whigs in the Commons broke into frantic cheering when they heard the guns which announced His Majesty's approach.

Enough credit has seldom been given to the old Parliament for its readiness (though by so narrow a majority) to agree to its own extinction; nor has enough account been taken of the very remarkable fact that the election of 1831, conducted under the old conditions, produced a majority of more than a hundred for 'the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill'. It would seem to show that Parliament was more sensitive to the wishes of the country than its critics believed, or than its composition would lead one to expect. It might have been adduced as good evidence that the Duke's optimistic view of the English electoral system was correct, but it is to be feared that he would have been the last person to adduce it. One of his bitterest opponents, Francis Place, put on record his opinion that it was a 'very extraordinary circumstance—that a boroughmongering Parliament should have been called together with an express recommendation from the King to put an end to that boroughmongering by which alone it could exist'.

In the new Parliament the old Bill was introduced with confidence in June and carried by September: the Lords rejected it in October by a majority as decisive as that by which it had passed the Commons. This decision, to which the Whigs in the Lower House responded by a vote of confidence, brought the country within measurable distance of civil war, or at any rate of the sort of Revolution which 1830 had made familiar. The riots at Bristol, encouraged by the presence of Wetherell,

an intemperate Tory politician (of whom it was said on a famous occasion that 'his only lucid interval was that between his waistcoat and his breeches'), were the most serious, but London and Nottingham witnessed similar scenes, and, more significant still, the Political Union of Birmingham pledged itself to pay no taxes if Reform were not passed, and in a fit of generous enthusiasm communicated its intention to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a request for his approval. Lord Althorp succeeded in dissembling his joy, but Lord John, who also received a copy of the resolution, replied in a famous phrase that it was 'impossible that the whisper of a faction should prevail against the voice of a nation'. The phrase was good and not unjust, but it was hardly the constitutional manner in which to speak of the House of Lords, and he was constrained to explain it away. Dickens did not publish his masterpiece till 1837, so that Lord John was unable to say, as he would naturally have done in later days, that he had used the phrase in a purely Pickwickian sense.

Peel, who was not an alarmist, when going down to Drayton Manor in November, thought it wise to have 'fourteen carbines, bayonets and accoutrements' sent down to him to enable his servants to defend the house from a probable attack.

After a brief recess the third Reform Bill was introduced; the chief difference between it and its predecessors was that the proposal to diminish the numbers of the House was dropped, and that more seats were thus available for the representation of populous places. It passed its third reading in March, after debates to which the most notable contribution was again made by Macaulay, who had recently been elected for Calne. The Lords consented to read the Bill a second time, but

Lord Lyndhurst carried an amendment in Committee which was intended to be, and was accepted as being, fatal, and the Ministry resigned, on being refused by the King the power of creating sixty or eighty peers.

The King's enthusiasm for the measure had cooled: he did not enjoy being dictated to either by Radical mobs or by a Whig Prime Minister, and he felt a very natural reluctance to surrender so important a part of his prerogative to the leader of a party. He endeavoured, through the agency of Lord Lyndhurst, to form a Tory Government. The Duke was characteristically ready to step into the breach, even though one of the conditions made by His Majesty was the introduction of an extensive measure of Reform: he had sacrificed his party once and was prepared to do so again. Sir Robert Peel was by no means equally ready: he drew the distinction that on the last occasion the Tories had been in office, whereas now they were in opposition: he was not prepared to accept the Duke's military conception of his duty, 'that whatever the sacrifice to him might be, he never could refuse the King's call, whenever and under whatever circumstances it might be made'. It is probable that his decision was the right one, and the difference of opinion throws an interesting light on the difference in attitude of the two Tory leaders. The Duke's Toryism was largely the attachment of a subject to the Throne; to Peel this attitude seemed exaggerated and even a little absurd; his loyalty was to his party, and the Throne was only the first, though the most important, of the objects which the party existed to support. Again, he may very reasonably have doubted whether the King was really best served by being allowed to appear to identify himself with any party; feeling was running dangerously high against the Court, and especially

I am afraid I can't make a jump of it
O Connell forever
Go it my boys we shall soon have it our own way.
Burdett forever
Hunt forever.
Down with your head
Dam — it. did n't you tell me you would not touch the Crown
A.J.B

against the Queen, who was regarded as responsible for the change in the King's attitude: 'the Queen's Theatre announced a change of name; the Adelaide omnibuses plied with paper pasted over the hated letters, and the Reform newspapers printed a paragraph about German "frows" from Cobbett's *Register* of quite indescribable brutality.'[1]

It was at this time that Place conceived the idea of saving the situation by a run on the Banks. 'I took a large sheet of paper and wrote thus—

TO STOP THE
DUKE
GO FOR
GOLD.'

In any case Peel's refusal destroyed all possibility of a Tory Cabinet, and the King was now forced to consent to the demand for the creation of peers put before him by Brougham and Grey: the latter at any rate was as reluctant to make the request as the King was to grant it, while Brougham did not conceal from King William that the request went far beyond what any precedent could be held to cover.

The consent was given, and it was enough, for the Duke, yielding to the King's request, marched off his forces in good order and withdrew from the division. The hot-bloods among the Whigs regretted that matters had not been forced to a crisis, but all sound constitutionalists rejoiced that the necessity had been averted. In his old age Brougham maintained that it was very doubtful whether the privilege would in any event have been exercised, and Lord Grey declared that he never would have consented to take the step. The Duke said

[1] *Life of Francis Place* (Graham Wallas), p. 297.

he had known all along that it was 'a game of brag', but in any case he showed his wisdom by not forcing a fight in an indefensible position: the Conservative peers of a later date had a less judicious leader, and their Pyrrhic victory of the moment led to a more disastrous retreat before the same threat.

The Bill became law, though the King, aggrieved at the pressure to which he had been subjected, refused to give his assent in person; the middle classes were established as the repository of political authority, and the House of Commons received a greater share of power than it ever possessed before. An eminent political jurist places the palmy days of its authority between the Reform Bill of 1832 and the Redistribution Bill of 1885, after which date the power and influence which it lost went partly to the Cabinet and partly to the constituencies, or rather in many cases to the party organizations by which the constituencies are worked.[1]

The two great charges levelled at the Bill by its more intelligent critics are perhaps worth recalling now, for later Reform Bills have emphasized their truth. It has been said, first, that it abolished a kind of select constituency without creating an intellectual equivalent: nomination boroughs served their purpose, and we have nothing to take their place. The University representation is too small to serve that purpose, even if it were always used to bring into Parliament men of real distinction who would have no chance of a seat elsewhere, and even that small representation of intellect is regarded as undemocratic. For, and this is the second charge, the Bill gave us uniformity instead of variety as the cardinal principle of the franchise, and the principle once admitted has to be followed to the bitter end. The '£10 voter'

[1] *Memoir of Sir W. Anson*, p. 100.

offered only an illogical and temporary halting-place, and he has disappeared. 'The middle classes, by a logical following of the doctrines of 1832, have now as little power as they had before that date, and the only difference is that before 1832 they were ruled by those who were richer than themselves and now they are ruled by those who are poorer.'[1]

There is much truth in these criticisms, but it is unfair to visit the blame, as their author does, on the hapless Lord Althorp. He did much to carry the Bill by his strength and honesty of character, but he was not the person most responsible for its shortcomings, except in so far as he is a type of the untheoretical British politician. The truth is that it has always proved impossible to discover the ideal form of the suffrage: the Spartan constitution, so much admired by other Greeks (who certainly had true political instincts), provided that their chief rulers should be chosen by the simple method of loud shouting, and it has seemed at times as if we might be driven to follow their example.

But these difficulties lay in the future: the middle classes were now to play their part in politics, unconscious of the doom which seems sooner or later to overtake all privileged bodies in a democratic age.

The advent of a new class to power suggests the reflection that in England party divisions have mercifully never coincided with those between the different sections of society. Divisions of opinion in this country run vertically and not horizontally, and the hopes based by any party on the enfranchisement of any new body of electors have been uniformly doomed to disappointment. There is no Radicalism like the Radicalism of the English aristocrat: the extravagance of Charles James Fox and the

[1] Bagehot, *Biographical Studies*, p. 337.

Bedford faction has found imitators in the same class from his day to our own, while there is no Toryism so profound as may be found among some sections of the poor. These two results are due to the peculiar position of the British aristocracy, continually recruited from beneath and continually passing into the ranks of commoners, and inheriting a tradition which, with all its defects, has fitted it to lead and to care for its dependents. Wealth draws a sharper line than birth, and the opposition of the merchant princes to the Factory Acts was more bitter and had less semblance of justification than that of the great landlords to the repeal of the Corn Laws.

The truth is that no class is free from the faults which it is fondest of imputing to others. The aristocrats who pull long faces over tales of municipal corruption forget that 150 years ago their ancestors did not scruple to make money out of the public in ways that we should consider criminal: corruption in high places has ceased to be a fashionable vice as completely as drunkenness, but it should not be forgotten that it existed. It was once a popular belief that the middle classes would be men of peace, but the period of their power saw Palmerston's Jingo speeches enthusiastically acclaimed, and that astute politician knew that no programme would be so certain to give him a majority with the electorate as an appeal to the warlike instincts of his countrymen.[1] At the present moment it is with many an article of faith that democracies hate war, but there is little warrant for

[1] It would be amusing, if it were not painful, to listen to the occasional denunciations of the 'militarism' of the upper classes. To any one who has had the opportunity during the war of observing the British schoolboy drawn from these classes it seems as impossible to exaggerate his distaste for all military exercises as it is to exaggerate the self-sacrifice and patience with which he faced the hateful necessity.

If we dont succeed in turning him from this road we're all lost.
Only keep his head straight & trust to his instinct for the Road.
If those fellows in the distance should attempt to stop us they will surely be run over & upset us perhaps into the bargain.
Altho I am here stuck in the mud yet I dont envy the situation of those Gent.ⁿ in the Tax Cart.
This old road is no longer safe to travel.
STATE TAX CART
Reform
By BALLOT
FB

that in history. It was of an extreme democracy that the poet found occasion to write:

> The side of our country must always be took,
> And President Polk, you know, he is our country;
> And the angel that writes all our sins in a book
> Puts the *debit* to him and to us the *per contry*:

and John P. Robinson, who endorses these sentiments, exists in large numbers in the most advanced communities. Any change of opinion on such matters that may come will be a change affecting the country as a whole, and those who preach a class war are as untrue to the lessons of English history as they are to the interests of their country. We are all a great deal more like one another than we care to believe, and herein lies our great and sufficient hope of mutual understanding.

XV

THE WHIG MINISTRY IN ITS LATER YEARS

THE CHIEF ACHIEVEMENTS OF GREY'S MINISTRY IN 1833 AND 1834

1. The Irish Coercion Bill introduced by Stanley combined the provisions of 'the Proclamation Act, the Insurrection Act, the partial application of martial law, and the partial suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act'. (Grey.)

2. The Irish Church Bill introduced by Althorp provided for the abolition of Church Rates, and of ten out of twenty-two Irish Bishoprics: it imposed a tax on all benefices, the proceeds to be administered by commissioners. The clause originally appropriating to any purpose approved by Parliament the income of suppressed Bishoprics was dropped on Stanley's motion.

3. Stanley's Abolition Bill (1833) provided that slavery should cease in the British dominions from August 1, 1834, apprenticeship continuing for a limited period, and that the slave-owners should receive £20,000,000 in compensation.

4. The Factory Bill introduced by Althorp provided that children under thirteen should not work more than eight hours a day, and 'young persons' not more than twelve.

5. The New Poor Law (introduced by Althorp in Grey's Ministry but passed after his retirement) provided that the country should be divided into Unions controlled by Boards of Guardians; that 'outdoor relief' should cease except for the sick and aged, the 'workhouse test' being imposed on the ablebodied.

XV

THE passing of the Reform Bill opened a new era in English political life, but it failed conspicuously to justify either the hopes or fears of the politicians who had debated it. So far from changing the character of Parliament at once it left its composition superficially unaltered; it had been thought, for instance, that its tendency would be to exclude lawyers, but a friendly critic notes twenty years later that their number had been trebled and their influence increased since they were 'no longer the quiet silent nominees of borough proprietors'.[1] The years that have followed have increased rather than lessened their power, and if (as some maintain) our constitution has recently been wrecked, we have at least the satisfaction of feeling that those who wrecked it knew what they were doing.

Again, it is a mistake to suppose that corruption at once disappeared with the passing of the rotten boroughs; if a Reformer like Lord Campbell can be trusted, in some constituencies at least there was 'more bribery than ever, and the new part of the constituency worse than the old'. It was only by slow degrees that the change came, aided by the introduction of the ballot; though there are cynics who maintain that the bribery of the individual has now given place to the bribery of classes—a far more demoralizing practice.

Once more, it was thought by observers at the time that the Whigs were firmly settled in the saddle for a

[1] *Life of Lord Campbell*, ii. 365.

generation.[1] They were to learn by sad experience how quickly office can dissolve the solidity of party ties forged in opposition, and the ten years of their rule are, with all their merits, ten years of the weakest government in our political history. To say this is not to underrate the services which they performed; even before 1835, when this survey closes, they had abolished slavery (persuading the House to give twenty millions of compensation for an entirely righteous purpose), had passed the first effective Factory Act, though one dealing only with child labour, had carried the new Poor Law, and had effected important reforms in legal and financial affairs. It is necessary to consider more closely why a Government which did so much was so continually on the verge of disruption.

The party suffered no doubt from the usual trouble of the uneasy alliance of Liberals and Radicals; the latter were unexpectedly weak in the new Parliament, but were still far from negligible, and Peel's claim in 1833 that 'the Reform Bill would not have worked for three weeks if the Conservatives had not been too honest to unite with the Radicals' is supported by Liberal testimony. His moderation was annoying both to Tory stalwarts and to those of his opponents who had hoped he would denounce the Reform Bill, but his choice of the new name Conservative was significant of much.[2]

The first opportunity for this weakness to show itself was, as usual, to be found in Ireland, which was to remain

[1] The same hope or fear has been as conspicuously falsified twice more in our recent history—in 1868 and 1885.

[2] The name was invented by Croker, who, as one who refused even to sit in a reformed Parliament, would have disapproved of the moderating purpose it was made to serve. A Tory split was only averted by Peel's influence; many were ready to follow Lyndhurst in his exclamation 'D—n Peel! What is Peel to me?

then, as it has been since, the chief disruptive force in English politics. Emancipation had not settled the Irish question; the Tories, who had predicted that it would not do so, were in a stronger dialectical position than the Whigs, who had hoped that it would, though the latter were perfectly entitled to say that a concession made practically to force in 1829 could not be expected to bring the blessings which would have followed an earlier and more graceful consent. But such a repartee, however unanswerable, did not absolve the Government from dealing with disorder in Ireland, and their attitude to the agricultural revolt in England formed a strong precedent for coercion. They had decided not to avail themselves of the services of O'Connell, and Lord Stanley, their Irish Secretary, was the exponent of the view that Ireland must be taught to fear before she could be taught to love: his policy, unkindly described as a quick alternation of kicks and kindness, was bequeathed by him to his party when he left it. It was a favourite saying both of Charles James Fox and Coke of Norfolk that every Irishman has a piece of potato in his head; their party has occasionally gone farther and maintained that the potato was rotten.

O'Connell lost no time in denouncing the perfidy of the 'base, brutal, and bloody' Whigs, and Tom Moore published in *The Times* one of his best political poems, entitled 'Paddy's Metamorphosis'. In the poem the Irishman, sent out as a settler to a foreign land to which other Irishmen had preceded him, was hailed on his arrival by a man undeniably black in a brogue undeniably Irish.

Can it possibly be? half amazement, half doubt,
Pat listens again, rubs his eyes and looks steady,
Then heaves a deep sigh, and in horror looks out:
Good Lord! only think, black and curly already!

The moral is obvious :

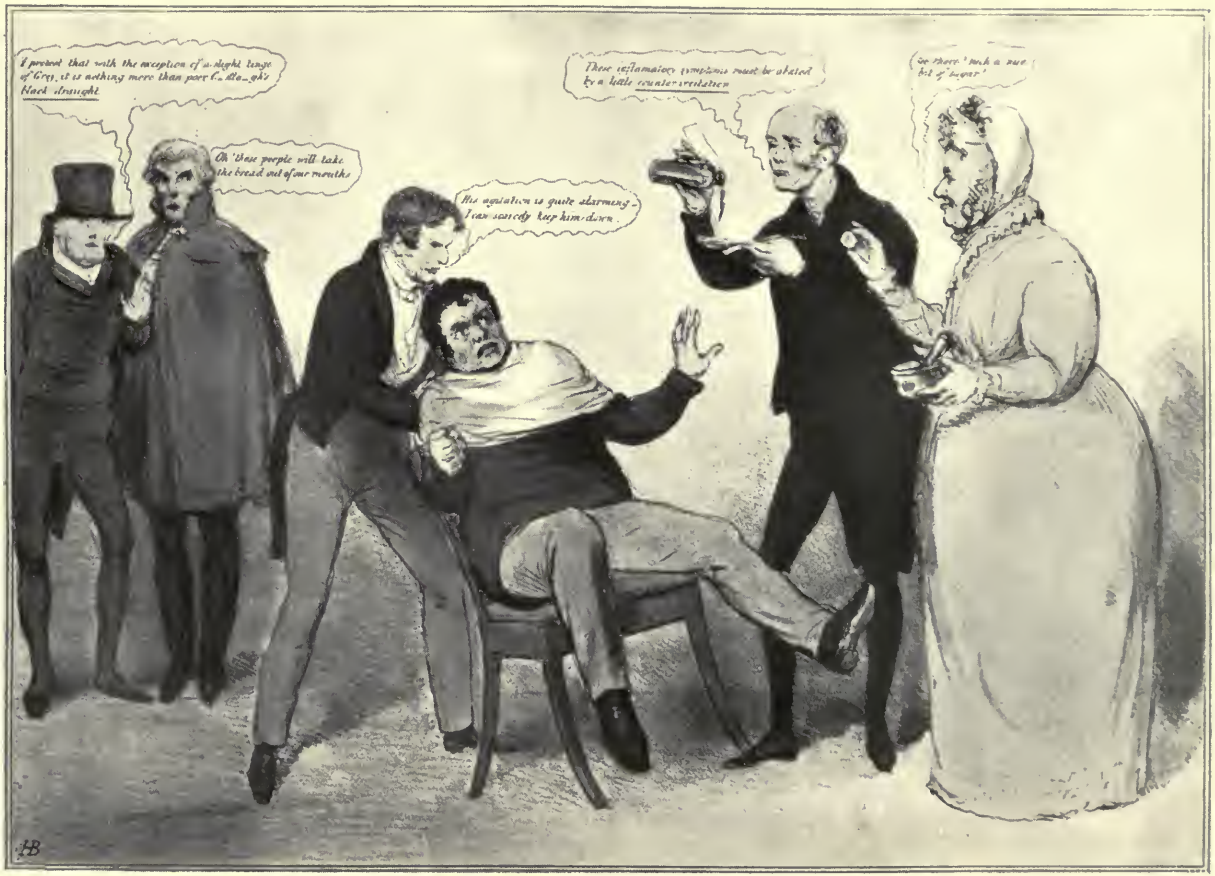
'Tis thus, but alas ! by a marvel more true
Than is told in this rival of Ovid's best stories,
Your Whigs, when in office a short year or two,
By a *lusus naturae* all turn into Tories.

And thus when I hear them 'strong measures' advise,
Ere the seats that they sit on have time to get steady,
I say—while I listen with tears in my eyes—
Good Lord ! only think, black and curly already !

The strong Coercion Bill which Stanley introduced was naturally abhorrent to the more liberal members of the Cabinet, and his courage in advocating a large measure of Irish Church Reform soon involved them in another and still more bitter controversy at home.

The Established Church in Ireland was in a very anomalous position ; the number of bishoprics was indefensibly large and their incomes high ; the clergy as a rule were very poor, and if it was argued that little pay was due to the 151 incumbents who had not a single parishioner the argument was clearly double-edged. The burden of the tithes had been deliberately thrown on the Roman Catholics, who were also called upon to pay the 'Church Cess' for the repair of Protestant churches.

Stanley's original object was to remedy wasteful expenditure and to lessen the grievance of the collection of tithe ; in the former part of his scheme he was successful, but the latter did not go nearly far enough to please the Roman Catholics, and when some of the Cabinet expressed a strong desire to apply some of the revenues of the Irish Church to general purposes, a question was raised which was to distract the Liberal party for generations to come. They had suffered much, and generously, from the cry of 'No Popery' in the past : to that was now to be added the cry of 'No spoliation of the Church,' and their


I present that with the exception of a slight tinge of Grey it is nothing more than pure C. Ala_gh's black draught
Oh these people will take the bread out of our mouths
His agitation is quite alarming – I can scarcely keep him down.
These inflamatory symptoms must be abated by a little counter-irritation
Or there's such a row but of buyer
HB

sufferings were destined to be neither so whole-hearted nor so heroic. It was in the thirties that the Whig attitude towards the Church began to define itself, and as defined it proved to be one of considerable hostility. No attempt has been made in these pages to deny the provocation which the Church had given to all reformers by its persistent alliance with the Tory party. The Whigs would have been more than human if they had not resented the alliance and used their power to weaken a body which had so often opposed them. But it is the worst of high principles that they are hard to reconcile with the elementary demands of human nature. The Whigs wished to support liberty of conscience—they had long struggled for such liberty on behalf of Roman Catholics and Dissenters—but they were, with pardonable weakness, less concerned with the consciences of Churchmen.[1] When they developed an enthusiasm for education it was mortifying to find that the Church had anticipated their zeal, and they found it difficult to be grateful. A sentence from a typically Whig historian dealing with a proposed grant for educational purposes shows the difficulty which good men feel in believing in the honesty of others: 'The clergy, with a folly too often characteristic of their profession, in many instances refused to touch a grant which was saddled with conditions to which their consciences

[1] Their difficulty was parallel to that felt by the Pious Editor in the *Biglow Papers*:

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur away ez Payris is;
I love to see her stick her claws
In them infarnal Phayrisees;
It 's wal enough agin a king
To dror resolves an' triggers,—
But libbaty 's a kind o' thing
Thet don't agree with niggers.

could not assent'.[1] The monopoly of a conscience is the last tyranny of the virtuous.

In the present instance the Government was willing to wound and yet afraid to strike. Russell and a majority of his colleagues frankly desired to secularize some of the property of the Irish Church; but they pursued the policy in a half-hearted way, and were forced after years of dispute to abandon the idea. Stanley refused from the first to entertain the proposal, and in the end he and Graham both withdrew from the Cabinet, and Grey (like Wellington in 1829) found himself at the head of a Ministry which was entirely of one complexion. But the lightening of the ship did not, in this case either, cause it to run on an even keel: though the political differences had vanished the personal difficulties remained. The most serious of these were caused by the eccentric personality of Brougham, whose versatility caused him to interfere with the business of every one else and made it extremely uncertain how his opinions would develop. Lord Melbourne's criticism in 1834 shows his feelings about him at that time: 'The Chancellor was Conservative at Inverness; but changing his opinions as often as his horses, by the time he got to Dundee he was downright revolutionary.' This prepares us for the famous sentence in which, after one of Brougham's brilliant speeches in 1835, he justified himself for not having again invited him to hold the Great Seal. 'My Lords, your Lordships have heard the powerful speech of the noble and learned Lord, one of the most powerful ever delivered in this House, and I leave your Lordships to consider what must be the nature and strength of the objections which prevent any Government from availing themselves of the services of such a man.'

[1] Walpole, *op: cit.* ii. 489.

Lord Grey, who was getting on in years, and far from ambitious of office, was not the man to control such a colleague: he was continually anxious to resign, and was only held back by the remonstrances of his colleagues, and in particular by the reliance he placed on Lord Althorp. When the latter resigned in 1834 as a result of some indiscretions of the Irish Secretary, Mr. Littleton, in his dealings with O'Connell, the burden became obviously too great, and he surrendered his office to the King.

Lord Brougham claimed the credit for persuading his Majesty to accept Lord Melbourne in his place: the King, who disliked Melbourne personally, would have preferred a coalition Government, but Melbourne was sufficiently alive to the newly developed principles of party government to refuse any such suggestion, and the King consented when he learnt that Lord Althorp had agreed to return to the leadership of the House.

Lord Grey carried with him into retirement the respect of all who knew him, and the proud consciousness that he had carried in 1832 a measure of Reform of which he had been the consistent advocate in Parliament for exactly forty years. He was by no means without his limitations, and his practical retirement from politics for a long period betrays the characteristic weakness of the aristocratic amateur. It is probable that, with all his unselfish zeal for the cause of the people, he looked at things always too much from the personal and family point of view. Nothing else can explain the strange remark of an ex-colleague of his who when asked by Lord Malmesbury in 1837 what the Earl's politics were at present answered 'What they have always been—Charles, Lord Grey'. Malmesbury is perhaps not altogether trustworthy as a retailer of political anecdote, but the story finds some corroboration in the words of one of the great admirers

of the Prime Minister, who declares that appreciative as Lord Grey was of learning and talent 'the nobility of nature could never in his eyes atone for the want of the nobility of name'. He adds the depressing doubt 'whether the most unintellectual nobleman in the realm was not a far greater man in his estimation than Sir Walter Scott'. These impressions may be unjust, but their existence explains his unfitness to lead a really democratic party. It is the more to his honour that he accomplished so much, and a striking proof of the value of singleness of purpose in a political career.

XVI

THE INTERLUDE OF 1834

LEADING MEMBERS OF LORD MELBOURNE'S CABINET. JULY 1834

First Lord of the Treasury	*Viscount Melbourne.*
Lord President	*Marquess of Lansdowne.*
Chancellor	*Lord Brougham.*
Chancellor of the Exchequer	*Lord Althorp.*
Home Secretary	*Viscount Duncannon.*
Foreign Affairs	*Lord Palmerston.*
Colonial Secretary	*Thomas Spring Rice.*
Paymaster of the Forces	*Lord John Russell.*
Duchy of Lancaster	*Lord Holland.*
Secretary at War	*Viscount Howick.*
Out of the Cabinet were :	
Viceroy of Ireland	*Marquess Wellesley.*
Chief Secretary	*Edward Littleton.*

LEADING MEMBERS OF SIR ROBERT PEEL'S MINISTRY. DECEMBER 1834

First Lord of the Treasury *Chancellor of the Exchequer*	*Sir Robert Peel.*
Lord Chancellor	*Lord Lyndhurst.*
Foreign Secretary	*Duke of Wellington.*
Colonial Secretary	*Earl of Aberdeen.*
Home Secretary	*Henry Goulburn.*

Mr. Gladstone, W. M. Praed, and Sidney Herbert held subordinate places in the Administration.

XVI

THE career of Lord Melbourne, the new Prime Minister, has been several times alluded to in these pages. He had entered Parliament as a Whig, but had been attracted by Canning and had been faithful to his memory after his death, paying the penalty by having to leave the Duke's Cabinet in 1828. As Secretary for Ireland for three years he had shown a conciliatory spirit and won much popularity; as Home Secretary under Grey he had maintained order in troublous times, though with needless severity. As his record will show, he was tainted with some political heresy, though there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of his conversion to Reform; he was temperamentally too tolerant to accept the Whig creed as inspired and unalterable.

His private life had been a strange alternation of good and bad fortune; he found himself unexpectedly the heir to a title and an enormous fortune, and he married a brilliant wife; but his marriage with Lady Caroline Ponsonby provided the most romantic scandals of his time, and they had been separated for some years before her death in 1828. His only son was a hopeless invalid.

Lord Melbourne's great achievement begins with his second Administration; at present, though his ability was undoubted, there were few who thought him sufficiently in earnest. It needed the accession of the young Queen to call forth the full treasures of statesmanship and wisdom, which he delighted to conceal from his virtuous critics behind a veil of frivolity.

The great achievement of his brief Administration

was the passing of the new Poor Law, and it is hardly possible to conceive a measure less characteristic of the Prime Minister's temperament. The old law had developed into a mere system of subsidizing from the rates the inadequate wages paid by employers; it was not unsympathetic, but was economically disastrous in its operation. The new Poor Law was based on very different principles; it aimed at substituting a rigid uniform system for the haphazard rule of thumb methods, which had admitted of infinite variation of practice, and the English people love uniformity as little as they love coalitions. It was for many of them their first contact with the Official Mind, and 'the new administrator of poor relief who could not be moved by persuasion or threats, who referred applicants of all descriptions to the "Act of the 4 William IV", who treated all questions in a clear but totally objective and unemotional fashion—such a personage was a new and terrific apparition'.[1]

It is not necessary to deny the merits of the new scheme to explain its exceeding unpopularity.

But the new Ministry fell, like the old one, on a personal question, and once again Lord Althorp, least self-seeking of politicians, was the occasion of the fall. His father, Lord Spencer, died in November, 1834, and the King took the opportunity to dismiss his Ministers. His justification was, as Lord Melbourne admitted, that 'the Government in its present form was mainly founded upon the personal weight and influence possessed by Earl Spencer in the House of Commons, and upon the arrangement which placed in his hands the conduct of business in that assembly'. King William by no means approved of the substitution of Lord John Russell as leader of the House, and thought that he would neither

[1] *Chartist Movement*, p. 84.

control that assembly nor make head against the Tory majority in the Lords.

These views were very possibly sound, but it was a great mistake for the King to decide such a matter on his own initiative; if he had allowed the experiment to be tried and it had failed his ground would have been strong; as it is his justification is rather personal than constitutional. Even if Melbourne was prepared to acquiesce in the argument for his dismissal, his colleagues were far from ready to accept it meekly. Brougham, by a midnight interview with the Editor of *The Times*, secured the insertion of a paragraph ending 'the Queen has done it all', and the prejudices of 1831 were rapidly revived.

Lord Wellesley, with brotherly animosity, put the blame on other shoulders: 'Circumstances had inspired me with a belief that the existence of the late Administration had become very precarious . . . But the manner in which it was dismissed *à la militaire* by His Highness the Dictator had never, I confess, offered itself to my imagination.' The Duke did not deserve this accusation, but it was he and Lord Lyndhurst who were called into consultation by the King: they agreed in recommending him to apply to Sir Robert Peel, who was then in Rome, and in promising to carry on the Government till he returned. Some attempt was made in Whig circles to throw discredit on the Duke for holding all the most important offices as a stopgap, but the public were rather pleased than scandalized at the unselfish industry with which he passed from office to office in Whitehall.

Peel made no difficulty about accepting the task which he had with good reason refused in 1832, and had no trouble in forming a Ministry. Its chief event was the issue of the Tamworth manifesto, in which he expounded

to his constituents the principles of the new Government. This document, issued after consultation with his colleagues, was a sign of the times, and an acknowledgement of the new fountain of power; it was the first step in that process of which Mr. Gladstone's famous Midlothian tour was the logical continuation.

Peel, who 'in three cases out of four knew a thing just in time, after it was known to the philosophers, before it was known to the empirics', was beginning to teach his master that they must 'trust the people'. This is sometimes claimed as a Whig doctrine, but it was of recent growth. Pocket boroughs had been no Tory monopoly, and it may not unfairly be doubted how soon Reform would have become a Whig principle if the majority of such boroughs had remained in trustworthy hands. It is a Whig Reformer who lays down that 'there is no principle more sacred than that when one gentleman holds a gratuitous seat in Parliament for another, and any difference arises in their politics, the former is bound in honour to surrender it'.[1] Disraeli was later on to expose with brilliant exaggeration, though with undeniable force, the claims of the 'Venetian oligarchy' to be the people's party: at present he was confining himself to more personal vituperation. His attack on the Whigs during this election was characteristically acid: 'Great, gentlemen, aye almost illimitable, as was my confidence in Whig incapacity, I confess they far surpassed even my most sanguine anticipations.'

But neither abuse nor concessions to the new spirit were of avail; the elections did not bring Peel any great accession of strength, and a defeat on the Speakership was only the first of a series which drove him, in spite of a great display of Parliamentary talent, to resignation

[1] Creevey, ii. 166.

in April, 1835. Peel had had time in his brief tenure of office to prepare four great measures dealing with the Church, three of which were destined eventually to be carried by his opponents with some unimportant additions; but those opponents were merciless so long as he remained in power, and blind to the merits of the measures they were subsequently to pass. He found, as Disraeli and other Prime Ministers were to find in years to come, that the one unpardonable offence is to hold a position which other people covet, and Peel's opponents were able at any rate to base their opposition on a sound constitutional principle. The King's action had loaded the dice too heavily against him, for the Liberals were able with justice to complain of that unusual use of prerogative which, whether employed by the Monarchy or the House of Lords, never fails to recoil on its employer.

At this point our survey closes: it is a picturesque accident that it was almost at this moment (October, 1834) that the old Houses of Parliament were burnt to the ground. In the year before, the two front benches, with Stanley at their head and followed by the rest of the House, had rushed to the window looking out on the river to see the great boat-race of the year, and an historically-minded member had remembered that it was to the same window that a similar crowd had hurried nearly two hundred years before, hoping to see Strafford pass in his barge on his way from the Tower to his trial in the House of Lords. But, putting such historical associations aside, it was impossible to deny that the accommodation afforded by the old building had long been inadequate to the increased numbers of members whom the Unions with Scotland and Ireland had brought to Westminster, and it was thought, not without reason, that the new type of member introduced by the Reform

Bill would be more diligent in his attendance than his predecessors had been. It was a sign of the times that the reporters, who had hitherto led a precarious existence in the Strangers' Gallery, were now given definite quarters of their own. There may have been some who hoped that their presence would improve the manners of the House of Commons, for it is a mistake to suppose that the more aristocratic politicians of former days were above making demonstrations of a kind painfully familiar to later generations. A chronicler of the doings of the House of Lords remarks with unconcealed pride that 'you will never on any occasion observe any of the Peers lying horizontally on their seats', 'nor have any of their Lordships yet afforded evidence of possessing the enviable acquirement of braying like a certain long-eared animal, yelping like a dog, or mewing like the feline creation. If you wish to see exhibitions or hear sounds of this description you must descend to the Lower House, where you cannot fail to form a very exalted opinion of the talents of the principal performers'.[1] The new building and the newly-privileged reporters were to hear stranger sounds and see stranger sights than these.

But, apart from such external accidents, there are good reasons for regarding 1835 as marking the end of one period and the opening of another, for after Peel's failure to govern as the King's Minister, the two parties, beginning to accustom themselves to their new names of Liberal and Conservative, were now fairly arrayed against one another: the time of the growth of Party Government was over, and that system was now to be tried on its own merits.

The rival principles were not indeed so clearly defined as the student for his own purposes might wish; but

[1] *Random Recollections of the House of Lords*, p. 40.

history takes little note of the convenience of students. Foreign politics were beginning to provide a touchstone of difference, though, as has been shown, this was due as much to personal causes as to a fundamental disagreement. The wheel had come full circle: the Conservatives were to protest against the manifold 'interferences' of Lord Palmerston with foreign powers, and the Liberals to be led, rather unwillingly, into a spirited foreign policy. In home affairs the Liberal alliance with the Radicals was still uneasy, and their belief in Free Trade was to be brought into strong opposition with their equally strong, and still more honourable, disbelief in slavery. Lord Melbourne's Government was to find it difficult to decide whether sugar grown by slave labour was to be introduced without restraint, or whether Freedom of the Person had not a higher claim on Liberals than Freedom of Trade. The Conservatives were bound by no tradition to oppose Free Trade: Huskisson had made great strides towards it in a Tory Cabinet, but their association with the landed interest was to lead them into economic fallacies. One of the fundamental divisions of civilized mankind, that between town dwellers and country dwellers, was soon to come into play, and the Conservatives were to be tied to the losing cause of the land. It is perhaps for this reason that they were to prove at least as ready as their opponents to accept and develop factory legislation, seeing in it not only the cause of humanity, but also a chance of fair reprisals on their political enemies, the large manufacturers of the town. Whatever were their motives, in this point of humanity and consideration for the interests of the victims of the industrial system they had no reason to fear comparison with their opponents.

For Ireland and for the Colonies, or what we should

call the Empire, neither party had as yet any consistent plan: both were content to live from hand to mouth, with results which we have still reason to deplore. It is characteristic of the times that the Secretary for War was, until 1854, also the Secretary for the Colonies, as though their main *raison d'être* was the provision of a skirmishing ground for the Army.

In ecclesiastical affairs, as has been shown, the parties were sharply divided. A good Liberal was beginning to doubt whether any special privileges of the Church of England were justifiable; a good Conservative was beginning to see that the Rights of the Church were a good outwork to the Rights of Property and therefore well worth defending. With the new movement in the Church which was just beginning (for Keble's famous sermon on National Apostasy was preached in 1833) neither party was to show itself sympathetic. The Tories might have appreciated its appeal to the past, but regarded all idealism as dangerous; the Liberals, who might have sympathized with its idealism, were suspicious of their ancient enemy, and both parties, as the future was to show, were desperately afraid of appearing to the electorate to have any sympathy with Rome.

Again, the effects of the Reform Bill were beginning to be felt, although, as has been said, it introduced no startling and immediate change into English political life. The Liberals were tending to become the representatives of the consumer, and the Conservatives those of the producer, and these rival interests combined with those of country and town, and with the fundamental incompatibilities of temperament on which all party divisions are based, to produce two reasonably consistent bodies, who may be regarded as representing two opposing principles.

Disraeli, indeed, denies that Peel's Tamworth manifesto, the charter of the modern Conservative party, is based on principle at all: he describes it as a dexterous attempt 'to construct a party without principles'—'a negative system' which substitutes the fulfilment of the duties of office for the performance of the functions of government—which has resulted in giving us that 'Conservative party who without any embarrassing promulgation of principles, wish to keep things as they find them as long as they can'. It can hardly be denied that this definition has in it an element of truth, nor that Peel was rather a political opportunist than a vindicator of any great historic principle. This made him the appropriate champion of a party of which Disraeli was rather the inspired prophet than the trusted leader. Such a man as Disraeli is to the average party leader what Shakespeare is to the modern playwright—the revealer of principles which, though he knows them to be true, he has a reasoned doubt whether his audience will accept. Even Mr. Gladstone found the Liberal party impatient of too much principle, though his experiments were tried on a much more favourable soil.

These two great men were in the next generation to draw closer the lines of party and to emphasize the fundamental differences between Liberalism and Conservatism. It is a pleasant paradox, and one which should warn us against hasty generalizations, that Mr. Gladstone was as assuredly a temperamental Tory as Mr. Disraeli was a temperamental Radical.

Mr. Gladstone entered Parliament in 1832; at that date his great rival was still without a seat in Parliament, and was appealing to his countrymen to 'rid themselves of all that political jargon and factious slang of Whig and Tory, and unite in forming a great national party';

the political instincts of the nation were too strong for him, and government by parties under the new names of Liberal and Conservative came into an existence which will indeed bid fair to be eternal if it survives the experiences of the great war.

XVII

EPILOGUE

XVII

To study English political history, at any rate for the last hundred years, is a liberal education in the characteristic merits and defects of our countrymen. It is probably true that as a nation we lack imagination, though our literature is a standing and inexplicable piece of evidence to the contrary; at any rate imagination is a rare feature in political life. From the death of Mr. Canning till Lord Palmerston's death set free the powers of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby's those of Mr. Disraeli, there is no statesman of the front rank for whom that quality would be claimed. There are many who will see in the instances I have given no reason to lament its absence, but there will always be some who will feel that we lost a great chance when Lord Derby's 'great refusal' in 1855 deprived Disraeli of the opportunity of carrying into effect those large ideas which might conceivably have revolutionized our conception of Conservative domestic policy. The attempt to continue that education of the Conservative party which the Duke and Sir Robert Peel had begun might very likely have ended in failure; but the Duke was certainly an old-fashioned schoolmaster, and newer methods might have met with more success; the attempt would in any case have been interesting. As it is, there remains to Mr. Disraeli the distinction of being the one supreme party leader of the last century who did not break up his party; and it is at least possible that it is the distinction that he would have preferred.

But, imagination apart, those other qualities of sincerity and courage without which no statesman can be supreme

are to be found in abundance in the politicians of our period. Sir Robert Peel and Lord Palmerston, the two most characteristic figures of the fifty years after Waterloo, represent in themselves the incarnation of the British character as applied to politics; courage has been denied to neither, and if their sincerity was questioned at times it is doubtful whether there is any prominent politician whose opponents cannot make out a plausible case against his complete straightforwardness. Sir Robert Peel would have resented such faint praise; it was characteristic of him (and a quality which he handed down to his most distinguished disciple, Mr. Gladstone) to insist that his complete rectitude both of purpose and of conduct should be enthusiastically acclaimed even by his opponents. He pursued his abortive duel with O'Connell till not only that astute Irishman but even his own friends were heartily tired of the subject, and the justifications which he left of his two changes of policy strike the reader as almost too complete to be entirely human. His foible was his own consistency, and he regarded it, perhaps with justice, as the most cruel of destinies that he should have been chosen as the hero of the two most dramatic inconsistencies in our recent history. Lord Palmerston would have made light of the accusation: a man who had sat in sixteen Parliaments was not likely to underrate the difficulties of consistency nor the acuteness of opponents. He would have claimed, with justice, that his fundamental principles had changed but little from 1809, when he entered office, to 1865, when he quitted it for ever; the principles may not have been imaginative, but they were simple and straightforward, consisting as they did in a belief in his country and its institutions; and if he added to them later the belief in himself as their most adequate representative, it is difficult to say that he was

mistaken. Abuse he expected, and no doubt at times knew that he deserved: when it came undeserved he bore it with the same fortitude which his doctor admired when he found him 'writing or reading on public business under a fit of gout which would have sent other men groaning to their couches'.

But if these are the most conspicuous examples there is no lack of others whose love of country and of duty make us proud of their services. The Duke of Wellington was not the only statesman who 'accepted every opportunity of serving his country as naturally as a horse takes water'. For some this comparison does less than justice to the sacrifice they made. Poor Lord Althorp, whose real passion was 'to see sporting dogs hunt', and who in his early days had only managed to attend the meet of the Pytchley after a sitting of Parliament by relays of horses at intervals of eight to ten miles along the road, calls across the years to Lord George Bentinck, who sold his stud and gave up the ambition of his life (to win the Derby) to his political duties, and to the Duke of Devonshire, who is credibly reported to have called a prize pig the finest sight he had ever seen. Lord Aberdeen, the kindest-hearted of men, who thought himself unfit to build a church because his hands were stained with the blood of the Crimea, made sacrifices as great as those of Lord Melbourne, who abandoned literature, society, and theology to train the young Queen, or Lord Grey, who deserted the happiness of Howick to serve the neglected cause of the people in its darkest hours. And if these instances seem chosen from the Tite Barnacles of our history, let us remember Francis Place, who, after struggles with poverty to which a weaker spirit would have yielded, lived to be called, little as he would have relished the term, 'the real leader of the Whig party'

and to prepare the way for a victory for which he is only now beginning to receive the credit. Again, though Place would have protested against being associated with one whom he called an 'impudent mountebank' or an 'unprincipled cowardly bully', the stormy life of Cobbett with its tranquil close in the odour of sanctity as Member for Oldham has much in it to make every Englishman proud of his race. He may have reflected, as he sat in the House of Commons, with pardonable pleasure, on the stormy days of 1812 when the *Morning Post* had written of him, 'We congratulate ourselves most on having torn off Cobbett's mask and revealed his cloven foot. It was high time that the hydra-head of faction should be soundly rapped over the knuckles'. Such amenities have never been lacking in English political life, but they have seldom found such felicitous expression. To read biography ('fact without theory', as Disraeli used to call it) is the right way both to appreciate the politicians of the past and to cultivate a reasonable attitude towards the politicians of the present. Neither then nor now shall we find any without fault; but then as now we can afford to indulge in the inexpensive luxury of gratitude, and to think rather of services rendered than of opportunities missed.

History repeats itself, as the first really great historian expected that it would, and in this country the repetition has been so close as to add a striking proof of the solidity or stolidity of the British character. Either interpretation is possible: the beetles who lived in the eight-day clock became pessimists when they observed that the weight sank by the end of the week, and the pessimists who have adopted their colour will lament that we perpetuate the same follies from generation to generation. On the other hand, the weight *was* regularly wound up

again, and time did not stand still though the beetles lacked the wisdom to discern the fact; and the optimist will hold both that our history presents an ascending spiral, so that the old difficulties are faced in a better spirit, and that there is at any rate no weakening of the British character.

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